IN THE SHADOW OF THE BLACK PINE

A G PLYMPTON

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A Romance of the Massachusetts Bay Colony

By

A. G. PLYMPTON

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TO

MISS ROSINE HOWARD

THIS BOOK ASSOCIATED WITH THE MANY
MIDSUMMER HOURS WE SPENT TOGETHER
IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED

A. G. P.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE BLACK PINE

A Romance of the
Massachusetts Bay Colony

CHAPTER I

IN the golden grey of a slowly lifting fog an English ship of good force, with quaint seventeenth-century decorations, was making its way along the King's roads or main ship-channel into Boston harbour. The passengers, or a greater part of them, were already on deck, disposed in sombre groups, the long Geneva cloaks or ample mendillons, worn as a protection against the dampness, giving a monumental character to these Puritan figures brought out in relief against a background of misty sky and water.

Among these lack-lustrous personages was a young woman of so dazzling an aspect that at her approach the sun seemed suddenly to pierce through the mistiness of the atmosphere. This effect may have been due in part to the brightness of her apparel (which in its fashion far from followed Puritan models, such shapes and colours

being chosen as would best set off dark eyes, a dazzling complexion, and a figure of much grace and elegance); and partly to the brilliance and flash that made the especial quality of her beauty. There was a fine self-sufficiency and overflow of vital power in the carriage of the young woman, which, though really the prerogative of youth, is more commonly associated with the flower of boy-hood; and this, with her vivid beauty, her ever-ready and dazzling smile, and a certain way of glancing she had, a sort of quick glowing of the eyes from beneath lashes far longer, heavier and darker than is common, sharply distinguished her from every other woman in *The Griffin*.

As she stood alone at the taffrail, looking at the bubbling water-track of the ship, she was humming a party-song of the Cavaliers, which, whether expressing her political sentiments, or merely suggested by the prayers of Puritans in the cabin, would, if overheard, have earned for her the darkest

frown of the many that she had encountered since she had left England.

"God save the King, the Queen, the Prince also,
With all loyal subjects both high and both low;
The round-heads can pray for themselves, ye know.
Which nobody can deny."

the girl sang in a flute-like voice, and her eyes sought a bauble that she wore—a filigree clasp, studded with stones, which fastened a narrow band of velvet around her arm. This clasp was one of the unredeemed pledges that the ill-starred queen, Henrietta Maria, had given to those who had befriended her cause, and it bore evidence to a winsome trait in this fair wearer, for never was an arm more readily held out to distress than that of Mistress Barbara Ryche.

What wonder if a rueful tear or two fell upon the bauble, when between herself and her fair island-home stretched this vast, misty ocean. The proud sea bore no mark of man's passage over it, though ship-load

after ship-load had it borne to yonder shore, foaming and chafing as each vessel drove onward, and roaring after each band of adventurers for miles along the wilderness-coast:

"Here lies a continent to subdue, so ye be bold enough, but never a rod shall ye claim of the free and shifting sea."

This pretty bay, however, had none of the anger of the raging main in its heart, and many times already in the world's history had this goodly haven been reached with joy. For since the fair midsummer day on which Winthrop's fleet had sailed along the north shore to the river Charles, and the saints had taken possession of the peninsula, Boston bay had been known to mariners from all quarters of the civilised world. Before the sails of the *Lady Arbella* shook in the harbour breeze, many a bold adventurer had cast his eager eyes upon the virgin beauty of this coast, with the conviction that here was to be found that Eldorado

that existed only in his own brain. Standish had sought here a home for the long homeless Pilgrims. The gallant Captain Smith had reconnoitred along the shore with his ill-fated company, choosing for a plantation the very site destiny had reserved for those Great-Hearts and Hold-fasts who were driven hither by the tyranny of the king eighteen years later. Still earlier, Champlain's barque had sailed into the pleasant bay, the occasion belike in the minds of the startled savages of sad forebodings of the still far-distant day of their doom. And drifting still farther down the hazy track of time, we come perchance upon a keel of the Vikings, its golden dragon aflame in the western sun, riding here on the old, old blue bay of Massachusetts.

The young woman upon the deck of *The Griffin* was occupied with no thoughts of such exploits of the past. The present moment, though it was but a fleck of foam upon the sea of time, was an epoch in her

life, ushering new friends, new interests, a new world, in short, on which the past pressed its claims in vain.

Hardly had the song died upon her lips when a man coming from between decks with a cloak over his arm approached her. He was tall, and of a powerful frame, his figure looming up in the mist with almost majestic effect.

Nature had well fitted Richard Rutland for the office which the friends of Mistress Ryche had intrusted to him. He had that combination of resolution, capability and gentleness that inspires trust; and not alone this self-reliant young woman, but all on ship-board, had more than once on their perilous path across the sea of darkness found a refuge in his protectorship. He was a Puritan wearing no courtly grace, or even such impetuous eagerness as Mistress Ryche might look for in a champion, yet his face and mien were not without gracious-

ness, and the voice in which he addressed the young woman made ample amends for any lack of flattery in his speech.

"That mantle of thine, Mistress Ryche," he said, "is but a poor makeshift for a covering in this damp air, and so I have brought thee Goodwife Garland's cloak, she being minded to stay below until we go ashore, not having yet recovered from the shaking we have had in the ship."

As he spoke, without good leave or liking, he placed the cloak upon the girl's shoulders.

"Why now," said the damsel in a jesting way, as she beheld herself and her finery suddenly snuffed out by this grim extinguisher, "would you make a Puritan of me outright?"

"Verily, I would. Thou must know it," he answered with a glance that carried his meaning too well for this practised young woman to miss it.

With apparent unconsciousness, however, Mistress Ryche directed her attention to the islands between which the ship was passing. The islands in the outer harbour had been so muffled in the fog that, as *The Griffin* threaded her mazy way among them, they had presented nothing more than blurred and faintly coloured shapes rising from the gray sea. Now, however, the fog having lifted a little, and the ship-channel between these islands being very narrow, the fortifications of the one, and the Governor's gardens upon the other, were distinctly visible. For a moment Master Rutland's eyes strayed to the flourishing fruit orchard and vineyard surrounding a small fort and simple summer dwelling, where, with John Winthrop, the Governor, he had so often enjoyed the freshening salt breeze and discoursed of that child of many prayers, the young town across the bay. Yet 'twas but a moment ere he sought again the still dearer prospect of her face.

"Thou must know what is my heart's desire regarding thee," he insisted.

As had happened twice or thrice before in the course of that desperate voyage, Master Rutland now saw how frank and grave those dark eyes could be when the owner thereof had a purpose beyond the enjoyment of the moment.

"I never craved a dull life, sir. By my troth I shall never be a Puritan," she said firmly.

"Doubtless so thou thinkest," rejoined Master Rutland, wearing such a smile as that with which one might listen to the foolish forecast of a child. "Yet do I truly believe the Lord hath sent you to our New English Canaan for naught else."

"Did I believe it, I would fain return in the ship when it sails for England again," she answered frowning, "but there is little likelihood that such a thing will come to pass. Ye know my kinsman, in whose household I am to dwell, is not of your town,

nor is he of your way of thinking in church matters. So that ye are all astray in your conjecture."

"Nay, Mistress, I will prove my words by a strange thing that befell which I take to be a portent of the event," replied Master Rutland. He turned his eyes upward to the fast-clearing sky and a smile of exceeding sweetness softened his rugged features. "Ye must know then," he began, fixing his clear-shining grey eyes upon her lovely frowning face, "that being strangely disquieted in my mind last night I left the cabin and went upon the deck. I sat down near this spot where we two do now stand together. The evening as ye know was fine, with a young moon, but there was a brisk wind and light clouds scudding over the sky. Now, by my troth, as I sat there I suddenly perceived that the clouds had assumed a woman's form, and, to waste no more words, 'twas thy figure that I saw there and no other."

"And what marked it for mine?" asked Barbara Ryche.

"Verily, there were tokens enough by which I knew it for thine. Of a truth, 'twas a rare likeness. The head was back tilted with the curls under a little cap blowing free in the wind. A mantle of the fashion thou wearest covered the shoulders, the ends thereof streaming behind like pennants, as did also the long tips of the sleeves leaving arms bared and flung apart with a free gesture that is wholly thine. The dress was ample and long, yet contrived to show a fair foot in daintily made slipper. Thou must thyself perceive the likeness that I speak of."

"I marvel that one could behold so much in trailing clouds," remarked Barbara, wearing a troubled frown. "Ay, but even so," she went on after a moment's pause, "what portent, sir, do you see in it?"

"Patience, I have not told all, for soon the light and airy shapes did gather more

closely together, settling at last into another form with the sober outline of what ye style a Puritan woman, in long cloak, and with such dignity of mien as many of our women wear. Long did I watch this figure, which, though all seemed changed in it, still I perceived as thine own. And greatly comforted I was with the revelation of God's purpose concerning thee; for well do I know that thou hast noble qualities that fit thee for a greater destiny than any thou hast hitherto thought of. 'Twas about one o'clock as I reckoned when the wind began to abate and the fog to rise, so I went in between decks and lying down blessed sleep did press her head upon the same pillow; and ever since am I no longer concerned for thee, knowing God leads thee hither for thy own good."

Barbara Ryche shared in the supersition of her day, and though possessed of a clever woman's skill in reading human nature, whereby she knew that Master Rutland had

let his affections stray from the true fold where he should have sought a wife to centre upon a person whose curls "blew free in the wind," yet, for the moment at least, she did not perceive that her companion had but seen in the clouds that which was stamped upon his own mind, and with much distress she cried out:

"In good earnest, Master Rutland, I would rather lie fathoms deep under this watery waste than live a life as dull as death on yonder shore. And what stripe of Puritan dost think I would make? The outside garb might be even as grey as this cloak; but beneath it, in my heart, would be the frivolity that is proper to me. Therefore by your own reason do I nòt well to refuse the mask?"

With a proud gesture, that yet to Rutland's eyes was marked by a natural grace, she flung off the garment that had been the occasion of so many words.

"Of a surety, the time I speak of has not

yet come," he said smiling; "yet can I well wait the Lord's time. As for the cloak, there is no longer need of it, for already are we nearing the town wharf."

There was something in the personality of Richard Rutland that often impressed one with a belief that he possessed prophetic power, and at that moment it seemed to Barbara that he could see her future as he saw her face, but by an effort of a strong will she freed herself from the influence of his words.

"Truly," she said with a dazzling smile, "to argue against your opinion is like pulling at a sailor's knot, for the harder one pulls the tighter doth it hold. Well-a-day, 'tis known you Independents do choose to live in desert places for the good pleasure of holding your own opinions, therefore I will not argue with you. And now Master Rutland, were you to offer again that comfortable thing that you do look upon as a

token of my fate, and I call naught but a warm cloak, I'll not refuse it, for in truth, sir, the air is sharp in this paradise of yours."

CHAPTER II

THE passengers of the in-coming ship looked upon a somewhat ragged coast, with a little town crouching under three fortified hills. The town clung to the sea as a child clings to its mother's skirts, shrinking from the strange, savage face of the wilderness; so that the chief part of the plantation was in sight. A fair growth it had made since its settlement, and many comfortable homesteads with orchard and garden could be descried, while the lanes that led from the water's-edge were lined by busy workshops, over which the owners lived as they had done in quaint little English market-towns before their exile. The streets were mere cartways, grass-grown between the wheel tracks and margined by green, while over and about the town fluttered bird-minstrels of infinite variety of plume and song, with a message to the grim Puritan from the glowing heart of nature,

to the effect that whether he approved or not, harmony and beauty were a part of the order of the universe.

To unsympathetic eyes accustomed to the nobly built cities of Europe, poor and contemptible the little settlement might seem; but to Richard Rutland it wore the halo of consecration. The narrow streets or lanes that wound around the hills, or followed the scallops of the coves, he had helped to tread out of the virgin spaces of the peninsula. He knew the history of each humble building, and more than all he was bound to its founders by love and covenant, the strongest ties recognised by human hearts.

Barbara Ryche, on the contrary, had left the old world with reluctance, having no lofty purpose for her sustainment. Her family was of the royalist and church party in England. Her father had been an officer in the Queen's household and for a brief season her beauty, then in its first bud, had adorned the court of King Charles. At her

father's death, however, this flower of the court was doomed to be transplanted from the King's parterre to the wilderness of America, or to speak without hyperbole, to the guardianship of a kinsman—that Samuel Maverick whom the saints on their coming hither found already settled upon an island in Massachusetts Bay.

Being an adherent of Sir Fernando Gorges, Maverick could not have had much sympathy with his neighbours, but it was greatly to his behoof to help them in the material advancement of their colony. He had business-relations with the Governor and some of the chief men of the plantation, and, perchance, consoled himself for the arbitrary measures to which he was forced to submit by the steady increase in his property. At all events, his standing was such that when his niece was to make the voyage in the same ship with Master Rutland and Goodwife Garland, there was no reason,

why he should not ask their protection for her.

It had been expected that she would be put ashore at Maverick's island, but having been delayed in the voyage and being in haste to get into port, the captain had refused her this accommodation, forcing her to land with his other passengers at Boston. Therefore, on disembarking in the new country, Mistress Ryche found none to bid her welcome, and was constrained to accept further service from Master Rutland.

The Griffin had among her passengers a number of persons related either by blood or affection to some of the more prominent of the townspeople, many of whom, therefore, as well as those of the more plebeian sort, both men and women, the rank and file of the new colony, were gathered upon the wharf.

The morning light which fell upon the scene displayed Puritan material in vari-

ous colours of human nature. Rigid and morose as it looked in Dudley who stood frowning in his impatience at the slow progress of *The Griffin,* there was an indescribable grace and elegance in Master Cotton whose persuasive geniality was contrasted again with the stern dogmatism of Endicott. It fell upon the winning graciousness of Puritan womanhood as well as upon much sour feminine piety. Such Roundheads as are made by the shears alone, mere coxcombs still for all their steeple hats, stood shoulder to shoulder with the saints, and Puritan coquettes did much deadly work no doubt while the good ship came in.

The scene set upon a trim wharf, edged with the fresh green of early spring, and lapped by the blue water of the bay, did not lack dignity or colour. The dress of persons of good quality, even in New England, was marked at that day by extreme elegance. It was fashioned of rich stuffs and the plainness of garb which the Puritan

wore as the outward sign of his inward grace, was the plainness of a period when the standard of elegance was something higher than our own.

An officer with a guard of musketeers was stationed on the wharf at that time in honour of a French pinnace bearing messengers to the Governor of the Massachusetts colony from the troublesome D'Aulnay, their burnished armour and plumed morions brilliantly reflecting the sun as it emerged from the fog, while a knot of Spanish sailors, grimacing over jests, happily made in a language beyond the skill of the constable to interpret, added whatever jocularity there was to the gathering.

In the making of Barbara Ryche, nature had wasted material for the want of which many a man has been disabled from playing that part in life circumstances demanded of him.

Forced to remain upon the wharf the court beauty amused herself by a scrutiny

of the persons congregated upon it, calling upon Master Rutland to designate those of most importance. This he was quite ready to do, and with such circumstantiality as somewhat to fatigue his listener with whom a word and a glance sufficed.

"So he in a preacher's gown," she said, "is that Master Cotton who was vicar of Boston Church in our Mother-country! 'Tis a woful change he made, I do profess. The lady yonder who doth seek to persuade me that she hath not a woman's interest in what may be the latest vogue in London is the Governor's lady. (Oho, Mistress, for all ye be so sly about it, I've caught you a-gaze a second time!) Now, pray, who may he of the sharp visage be, with eyes like an awl, and even his beard pointed like a dagger?"

"'Tis Master Endicott, a man of good stanch quality, Mistress, who hath served us both as governor and deputy-governor.

He hath ever proved a faithful guardian of our liberties."

"A guardian angel to the life." cried Mistress Barbara with a merry laugh and answering Master Endicott's glance with one which, if better natured, had not a whit more meekness in it. "I like him not, nevertheless, and would fain hear of that comely youth that makes the third of those who stand in a group together. He has the air of one of consequence in the community. Pray what office hath he?"

"Why as to that, not being a church-member he hath none, nor can have by our law. Nay, not were he of ever so high estate. The young man is called Jasper Annesley and he is a nephew of Captain Hollingsworth who hath served us well in our war with the Pequots. Young Annesley, who is an orphan, has been educated at the college from which he was graduated some years gone by, but he hath since shown

himself of a proud and discontented spirit, consorting chiefly with such youths as follow bad courses, and not willingly settling himself in any calling."

"Why, by your own allowance none is open to him since he can play no part in public affairs and 'tis not meet for a gentleman of his quality to set himself to a homely trade."

"You are wrong," answered Rutland, "for the humblest trade is accounted honourable among us; a contempt for work ill becomes the founders of a colony, and such haughtiness hath ere now been the wreck of many a plantation in this wilderness."

"Yet some there be not planned by Nature for Colonists," Barbara insisted. "Look at the youth and tell me if the thought of harnessing him to the yoke doth not give a sense of wrong."

The person of the young man, it must be owned, bore out her words, not by reason of extreme delicacy of face or figure but be-

cause of an untamed, though gentle air that belongs to certain creatures never yet subdued to man's use. Among these sturdy colonists with their stiff, massive figures made for work, and their broad, phlegmatic, patient faces full of earnestness, he suggested a young deer in a company of fine draught horses. His head was held high, his velvety brown eyes had a startled look, and in his slim figure there was an alertness as if his sensitive spirit had intimations of coming danger, and in a moment he might bound away. It might be observed also by one sensitive to those signs on the social surface that betray the secrets of personal feeling and mutual influences, that his companions spoke less familiarly to him than to each other, as if in recognition of a dissimilitude between them; while on his part, although his manner lacked the reserve that marks his countrymen, (showing, in truth, all the impetuosity of an impulsive temperament) there was in it a cer-

tain wistfulness, as of a displaced being, or as if he was trying to understand what bond there might be between them and himself.

At the moment when Barbara ceased speaking he suddenly turned from his companions, and for a brief space of time, yet long enough to be observed by more than one of those who stood upon the wharf, bent his eyes upon the young beauty. His glance had neither impertinence nor merriment in it, nor was it that complacent admiration with which his two companions had been regarding her, yet was it hardly more to the liking of the majority of the persons assembled upon the wharf. This singular expression that suddenly transformed young Annesley's face was like that passionate adoration with which some rapturous mystic might gaze upon the image of the Virgin.

Being of live flesh and blood and therefore unable long to maintain the passivity of

the image, and perceiving that by reason of this young man's too admiring glance, she had become the target of many eyes and no doubt the subject of much speech as well, she begged her companion to show her some house of entertainment where she could await her uncle's coming.

"For a young gentlewoman like yourself the ordinary is no fit place," replied Master Rutland, believing no doubt that the inn would afford little security against curiosity and admiration. "Yet rather than to tarry here till thy uncle comes, or the ferry-boat starts, will I take thee to the Governor's house, knowing he would be ill-pleased else."

Mistress Ryche, distrusting, perchance, Puritanical hospitality, could not be brought to look with favour upon this suggestion, but before the matter could be settled, a small boat was discerned in the harbour. The boat was rowed by a negro

and carried a single passenger who Rutland soon became assured was Samuel Maverick, as in truth it was.

At this time Maverick was in the prime of life, and handsome in the Elizabethan style. As one of the earliest pioneers in the new world his life had been rough and laborious, and the ruddy brown of the high-bred face that rose above his white ruff was the colour the fair Saxon skin becomes under constant exposure. With abounding health and a sanguine temper he was no ascetic, but a man of a deep domestic tenderness and a social grace that was wofully out of place in this austere community.

Arriving at the Boston wharf Maverick came ashore, and met his fair kinswoman with a warmth of manner that well atoned for his laggard welcome. And now, at last, as Mistress Ryche walked across the pier and set forth for that rude log fortress that hereafter was to be her home, the by-standers had that occasion, for which no doubt

many of them had lingered, to behold her in all the surprising splendour of her youth and beauty, with all her high-born grace that bespoke the court, her dainty apparel that gave no sign, alas, of penitence and divine grace; and worse than all, the air of finding life agreeable. A woman made by God for man's delight or an extra choice device of Satan for his ruin, according to the humour of him that looked upon her.

The craft among which Maverick's boat found its course were of many sorts; for beside the English ship and the French pinnace, a Spanish brigantine with a cargo of oil and wine that she was exchanging for beaver pelts was in port, some boats of American build were at anchor in the bay, and an Indian canoe paddled by two savages, wearing nature's livery and as hideous as paint and feathers could make them, passed so close to Maverick's boat as to give Barbara a sudden piercing realisation of the distance she had travelled from her

gentle mother-country, while within their own boat was the African slave whose grotesque ugliness fascinated her and yet by its whimsicality increased the weird impression made upon her by the scene. The longed-for land, too, had a savagery in it with a coast showing sharp and jagged teeth where the juniper crept low upon gravelly shores, while beyond, on the barrens, were companies of those savages of the vegetable world, the gnarled old cedars and pitch pines. Along the north coast lay wide waste marshes, from which rose great flocks of strange water-fowl; while to the south rose the light misty-blue ridge of Mount Arrow-Head in whose fastnesses she had been told were hidden the hideous and benighted red-men.

Small wonder if the court beauty's heart should fail her as she looked upon this wild scene, but if this was so she gave no sign of it, and the face Maverick so sharply scanned wore a look of bright and hopeful interest.

"Faith, niece," he said in good pleasure at last, "ye are a sight to cheer a natural man's heart in this dull country of ours. Have you come hither to drive our young gallants out of their wits with your amazing fairness? Marry, 'tis in my heart to pity 'em."

"'Tis plain that the sour speech of the saints your neighbours, be not catching," she answered gaily. "On my soul yours be the first courteous words I have heard since I turned my back on England. Perchance 'twill take away the taste o' the psalms, the long prayers and pieties which were the only entertainment the ship offered. But dull company there was for a young maid on that ship, I'll warrant, and though I endeavoured to make the best of it, still if in courtesy, I did stretch my lips for a smile, the back of my mouth was all a-hoop in a yawn. But seriously now, Uncle, oft do I ask myself that self-same question, for I fain would know for what purpose I have

traversed all these leagues of boisterous sea."

Some women, like some men seem fated to play a part in the world. They do not consciously seek adventures for wherever they are, *there* is the arena, and at each step onward they instinctively look about them for the materials of which dramas are made. Such a woman as Barbara Ryche might well be confident that destiny in bringing her to this woful desert had yet some purpose to fulfil.

She turned her soft dark eyes wistfully upon the vast rolling plain of the sea, but the sea made no answer save such cheerful assurance as she could read in the playful waves, now sunlit and sparkling. For the fog had nearly cleared, leaving but a light pearly mist that yet let the sun glitter through it and in it Maverick's island seemed not so dreary a habitation. The stronghold was substantially built, capped by four pieces of ordnance, and nobly set

on a sandy cliff rising dark against the east. Long purple shadows lay on the green turf, while the fertile fields beyond, over which the spring was creeping, displayed themselves joyously to the sun which set every water-drop a-dazzle, so that no resplendent holiday garment glittering with gold and jewels was to be compared to this island mantle. A group of wind-wrenched cedars, unsoftened by the luminous vapour, also seemed to hint what the rigour of winter might be.

On the beach, just below that point on the cliff where the cedars grew, was a small wharf or landing, which under the powerful arm of Scipio, the African, the boat now reached. Having jumped ashore and helped Barbara to land, Maverick welcomed her to that portion of the new world of which he was owner and master.

"This island doth grudge hospitality to none, he said; "and none here need pay anise, and cummin to yonder grim saints,

but 'tis a rough place for a dainty maid, and I could wish for your sake that I did live in yonder town."

"Nay, good uncle," cried Barbara, with a feigned shiver. "Right thankful am I to have the width of the bay between me and the saints. Far rather than endure their sad company would I bide here with you who have the spirit and good cheer that should be in a gentleman. 'Pon the honour of a maid, since I did arrive in port there has been but one other who hath not given me sorrow to look upon."

"And that other?" asked Maverick curiously. "Have ye already found some young blade to your liking?"

"Nay," she answered him with a smile, "I did speak but of your own blackamoor here, who in his very grinning ugliness doth bespeak my favour."

CHAPTER III

ON the afternoon of the first Sabbath after the arrival of *The Griffin* a great number of persons were gathered in the church. As every inhabitant of the town was forced by law to attend services no inference could be drawn as to the popularity of the preacher from the crowded seats. Yet to the greater part of the congregation that now listened to Master Cotton, the excitement of his discourse compounded of argument, persuasion and denunciation and delivered "with a very awful majesty," was a welcome break in the monotony of the week.

Those were dreary times, but of all our forefathers suffered in the wilderness by hunger, cold, homesickness, scourges, savage-enemies, that suffering laid upon them by their theology, perhaps, made the greatest part. Conscience ran mad, raving horribly of Death and the Judgment day.

Every feeling, thought and act was drawn before it as to an insane master whose mania is punishment. Penance, vows of chastity and poverty, rosaries, auricular confession and absolution were forbidden, and the consciousness of his sins was left to work upon the penitent's imagination until he fell prostrate, bathed in sweat, with agonised prayers for an assurance of his election; reason sometimes being unhinged by the strain and the inward tragedy ending in suicide. Those were dreary times indeed; for the children of Grace were few and the children of Wrath were many.

The afternoon wore on and the dusk stole into the Puritan church, yet when at last the final prayer was made instead of passing out into the wholesome comfort of the outer air, the people kept their seats as if in expectation of some farther ceremony. It was the time custom prescribed for the coming forward of such as had been "wounded in

their hearts for their sins," and desired to enter into the church covenant.

In answer to his name a young man left his seat and stood before the assembly. It was the self-same youth whose history Master Rutland had given to Barbara upon the wharf, for owing to his absence from the colony he had not heard of the propounding of Jasper Annesley to the congregation, and the long trial he had endured of which it was to be hoped the present ceremony was the final term.

The singular beauty of the young man was even more impressive on this occasion than it had been on the crowded wharf. The unwonted sobriety of his garments proved it to have been received from the stars, and was not due to personal adornment. His uncovered head was held backward and his eyes, wide flung and softly dark, looked forth upon the assemblage with the glance of one seeking in his ex-

tremity to distinguish friend from foe. He stood with his weight upon the forward foot, the other drawn backward with heel raised slightly from the ground the attitude giving him an air of indecision or even of distrust.

The growing darkness made artificial light in the church necessary and the ceremonies were delayed for a few moments while the candles were lighted. The space where the congregation sat was but feebly illumined, but the light from a flickering taper here and there brought out from the mass of shadow some stern-faced saint with head thrust forward in his grim eagerness. The candles upon the pulpit shed a brighter though no brilliant light upon the black-robed figure of Master Cotton whose office it was to conduct this service, and also upon the Elders sitting beneath it, but of all those in the church, the expressive, sensitive face of the young candidate was most clearly illuminated, so that every feeling

that passed over it was distinctly visible to the congregation.

As the young man stood there under the scrutiny of so many pairs of eyes, he was aware of a strange emotion. It had probably long smouldered unperceived in his heart and now at this untoward moment, perhaps fanned by some look, word, or tone, it suddenly sprang into conscious existence. The emotion was that of resentment toward those of whom he was soliciting the hand of fellowship.

The long probation the Puritans enforced upon one who wished to become a church-member, was made miserable to him by reason of an industrious seeking for offences in his life and conversation for which the probationer must give satisfaction to the church; and also by the necessity he was under to disclose his inmost soul to prove his penitence. Such probing might well leave a sensitive soul with a sense of outrage, and however earnest hitherto had

been Jasper Annesley's desire for the ordinances of the church and the sweet solaces of religion, at that moment he was conscious only of his unfitness to receive them. Being convicted in his own mind of so grievous a fault, and being of a fair and open disposition, he sought to summon courage to stay the proceedings; but his nerves were too unstrung by the harrowing experiences he had already passed through, and he could not immediately force himself to a mortifying public confession.

Although he had previously, after long trial, given satisfaction as to his fitness to be received into the church, it was the custom when calling a person in the public assembly for the last time, to subject him once more to trial; therefore Master Cotton rose and addressing the congregation according to the prescribed formula, said:

"This man, Jasper Annesley hath been hitherto propounded to you, desiring, to enter into church fellowship with us,

and he having given satisfaction in private and public according to the nature of the offences charged upon him, and since that time we have not heard anything contrary to his admittance, therefore now if any of you can give testimony why we should not go on to receive him, you may yet speak."

There was a moment's silence, then a man arose with a movement that seen through Jasper's eyes, seemed the eagerness of a hound released from the leash, but which it must be confessed, to other observers appeared only the natural readiness with which a person of a decided mind is wont to act. The man was assuredly of an unpleasing personality, with a physiognomy disfigured by arrogance. He had a harsh dry voice with as little human sympathy in it as in the sound of husks rattling in the wind. If it was disagreeable to one who heard it for the first time, how much more so to Jasper accustomed from childhood to associate it with disapproval and contempt.

"Brethren of this congregation," began Solomon Hollingsworth, "there is, as it appeareth, still matter of complaint against this man why he should not be received among us; for by several witnesses can it be proved, that he hath been guilty of ungodly conversation concerning a young woman who hath recently come to this plantation, the substance whereof is that the mere fleshly beauty wherewith she is endowed is a means of grace, and worthy of adoration; furthermore that there be naught in this godly commonwealth, (albeit 'tis that of God's chosen people), to be fit for the eyes of this young woman to rest upon, with more to the same purport. Therefore, there be good reason to doubt if he hath yet sound knowledge and true godliness, and whether Satan be driven out of his heart."

If the expression of Jasper Annesley's face was in accordance with his inward state, he was no longer inspired by the feeblest spark of religious emotion. He

cast a glance at the speaker so burdened with hate, that doubtless that busy personage who has already been mentioned with some frequency in the course of this narrative, but whom the Puritans themselves would be the last to have omitted from their *dramatis personae,* must have exulted in the thought that he had regained possession of the young man's soul.

Before going on to admit him into their fellowship, it now became necessary for the church to enquire into this new charge against him; the exercises were therefore concluded, and the congregation dismissed.

The services having been prolonged until so late an hour, there was no light in the streets by which it could be seen how the young man carried himself in these trying circumstances. He was in that humour when we do not willingly face even those who in our more genial moods we take close to our hearts, when the spirit is so bitter that it loves to take account of its griev-

ances, and the pain of the present is not sharp enough, but must be quickened by digging into the green mould of the past for grudges that were best left hidden there.

As he walked onward, he recalled himself as a lonely child in his guardian's household undergoing with incredulous bewilderment his first experience of injustice and cruelty. He remembered the terror he had suffered from Hollingsworth's harsh creed, how it had followed him as some soft-footed monster ready to spring upon him in the sunniest June day, and how at night he lay shuddering in the infested darkness, with the terrified belief that he was predestined to eternal destruction. In particular he recalled a certain Sunday morning at church. A horrible crime had been committed in the plantation which was made the subject of the preacher's discourse, the criminal in his chains being present. The unhappy man promised to the gallows on the morrow, or in the phrase of the preacher—"within a

few hours to flee down to the pit," was held up as a warning, and by his white face, his groans and writhing figure, testified to the terror and agony that filled his soul. As vividly as he could, the preacher portrayed the torture of a lost soul in its final state, but the ardent and fantastic imagination of Jasper contrived to add to the horror of the picture. The speaker, perchance, fell back from his words upon the comfortable assurance of his own election, whereas that lost soul, to Jasper was as his own. Though many years had passed since that day, they had not robbed the scene of its burning colour.

When he outgrew the loving dependence of childhood, Jasper sought to throw off the reins from his neck, but he gained little by it save the hate of the despotic old man, whose authority over him was upheld in every point by the Puritan government. At this period he sought also to escape from the teaching and discipline of Calvinism;

but here too, he was forced to learn his own helplessness. A word or look, a certain aspect of nature, a colour or a sound, might stir the old dread, and again as a terrified child he carried the burden of an awakened conscience. But his penitence was never accepted as sincere, and he grew to manhood with his title of blessedness unsecured.

With his mercurial temperament, a love of beauty that was half Pagan and a strong sense of humour, 'twere a wonder if he did not sometimes strike sparks out of the flinty temper of the time.

On turning from the church building, Jasper left the more populous part of the town, and walked along a quiet foot-path that wandered pleasantly around a hill. The spot chosen by the colonists for their plantation had not the beauty of woodland vistas, but the somewhat scraggy peninsula, whether clothed in its vivid summer verdure, or its more sombre winter hues did not lack in a picturesque quality. The con-

figuration of the country was bold and irregular with many hills, its edge notched by the sea into lovely coves and noble headlands, and the absence of trees was compensated by the wide expanse of sky and earth and sea. The forest with its lovely green ceiling in a measure houses a man, but on such bare hill-sides he finds an exhilarating sense of freedom and his courage and energy are quickened by the rolling clouds, the play of the surge, and the wind that sweeps unhindered over its grand range of sea and land.

At this time, however, there stood upon the road Jasper was travelling, and which was called from the one building upon it, the malt-house road, a solitary pine tree, that though of the white or Weymouth variety, was often spoken of by the townsfolk as the Black Pine. So stiff and dark it rose against the sky, it might have stood as an arboreal representation of Puritanism, or that rigid and gloomy creed that over-

shadowed the settlement. The crows with a great flapping of dusky wings were sometimes found perching there, but no dainty-bright singing bird ever lighted upon it and the foliage was noticeably darker than that of other pines. Moreover, the air in its dense shadow-circle seemed to Jasper Annesley, to have a peculiar chill, which he firmly believed to be due to some unusual property of the "Black Pine."

Certain inanimate objects seem to play a part in some lives, to be associated with movements of extreme emotion, and this tree played such a part in Jasper's life. He had been standing beneath it when a messenger brought him word of his mother's death. Here in a moment of boyish passion he had struck a comrade, and for a moment endured the horror of believing that he had killed him. In all likelihood, these and other shocks vibrated through him, sending that tremor through his veins which he thought of as the spell of the wizard tree.

In his preoccupation Jasper had not noticed that he was approaching the pine but suddenly feeling his flesh creep, he looked up to find himself almost under its branches. Uttering an exclamation of dismay he hurried on. Leaving the tree behind him, however, he continued to follow the foot-path as slowly as before, sometimes even coming to a long halt; yet his manner was not that of one who lacks purpose, but of a man waiting for the moment when his purpose can be put into action. When at last, having come out again upon the market-place and seeing that the streets were empty and the meeting-house door fast closed, he set out at once for the house of Solomon Hollingsworth.

This dwelling stood upon a fine site near the bay. The building was of fair size and comfortable, but with no hint of that prosperity for which, quite as much as for the enjoyment of the true reformed religion, it was sometimes said, the owner thereof had

come into the wilderness. Hollingsworth answered this charge with Puritanical logic, for if his ventures in traffic had been prospered, he said, it was a thorough good proof of his own worthiness, since the Lord bringeth the desires of the wicked to naught.

Entering the house with all the familiarity of an inmate, yet with none of the cheerfulness that should fall upon a man when entering his own home, Jasper went directly to his uncle's room.

To a sharp ear his decided foot-fall on the wooden floor would have given a hint of his humour; but Hollingsworth discovered nothing more in it than the usual haste with which his young kinsman betook himself to his own quarters.

Over the desk at which Hollingsworth sat hung a portrait of himself, which had always been accounted a poor likeness, but for all his agitation Jasper remarked the perfect similarity at that moment between the painted face and the one of flesh and

blood beneath it. It seemed that the artist had also surprised his sitter with this self-same expression of complacent vanity, and, without twisting the features into a smirk, by some secret of his art that we will not attempt to discover, had fixed it upon the canvas. At no time had Hollingsworth a dignified or fine countenance. The eyes were sharp, the nose compressed at the nostrils, the brows frowning, and when in addition to this he thrust out his under lip, as he did whenever he wished to express contempt or disapproval, he was insufferable. By these concerted movements, the features were pinched together in the middle of the face, an effect that imparts meanness to any physiognomy.

"I would have a word with you concerning the charge ye made against me at the assembly," Jasper began.

"And which belike did greatly astound you coming from my lips," said Hollingsworth, assuming his ordinary expression.

He leaned back in his chair and crossing his legs, looked at them with an interest that struck Jasper as little short of maddening. His big stomach, round tapering legs, and dwarfish feet were repulsive to his nephew's taste, but in his secret heart the old Puritan was vain of his figure. "No doubt you felt that I should first have spoken privately to you," he went on, "but the matter came not to my ears in due time, moreover, if the charge be false, you can disprove it, if not, surely you are not qualified to enter into the covenant. Have you aught to say disproving the charge?"

"I do yet hold the opinion I expressed upon the wharf at the landing of the court beauty," said Jasper, firmly, "for truly such fairness doth melt the heart into a state where it more easily believes in the goodness of God."

"A sane man doth not question the goodness of God," said Hollingsworth, pushing out his under lip and looking at his nephew

with lids partly closed over his sharp eyes. "Verily, your words do justify me in what I have done, for our covenant doth bind us to renounce all idolatry, all human invention what-so-ever in our worship. 'Twill be no easy matter to give satisfaction to the congregation for such a heathenish belief."

The young man flung up his head.

"I shall put myself to no such trouble, for I no longer desire to be admitted to the church. Too long already have I been harried concerning this business, and by my faith," he added, with bitter humour, "methinks 'tis heavenly peaceful to be a castaway."

"Jasper Annesley, I fear the day of grace is over with you and your soul is lost, else you could not exult in your own destruction," said Hollingsworth in a tone which it must be confessed seemed to show little sorrow for so awful a supposition. "Dost not know," he continued, using the haggard phrases of his sect, "that the adversary of

the Almighty hath the whole universe against him? The very elements do conspire to his hurt, the air hath a poison in it for him, the sea hath a greed to suck him down to destruction. At any moment a bolt from the heavens may send him to his burning desert. His enemy is the Lord of Hosts. Alas! thy soul is lost!"

"An' if my soul is lost 'tis you who must answer for it," cried Jasper, stung into boldness. "Ay, 'tis plain as daylight to me now, though before I did never see it, that 'tis you who have ever stood between me and the church ordinances. 'Tis you who have ever filled my mind with doubts of God's goodness. If my soul be lost, then 'tis your own work."

Had there been any heart in Hollingsworth, he would have pardoned these exaggerated accusations because of the wild despair from which they sprang, and which seemed to come from the depths of the young man's being. Plainly, Jasper Annes-

ley was in a measure unhinged by the excitement of these many weeks, for his eyes glittered feverishly, and his gestures in their violence were grotesque. For a moment, Hollingsworth watched him curiously, his irritation subsiding at last into an amused yet intolerant contempt.

"Since the Holy Scripture doth forbid it, I call no man a fool, yet the Lord knoweth what's in my mind," he said at last, letting his scornful eyes rest on Jasper; and he compensated himself for his abstinence by a sneer that carried as great significance as the word his piety forbade. "My conscience brings naught against me," he continued, "for you have been Christianly instructed, and no reason do I know of that ye be not received into the church save only your own unfitness. On my life, methinks 'twere as well to lie and rot in one's sins as now and again to make such doleful hue and cry over them, and then go on as wickedly as before."

The young man sprang forward as if he

would fain lay violent hands on him who spoke with such open sneers of those periods of penitence which, whether transitory or not, he remembered as the most agonising periods of his life. If such was indeed his impulse, however, he checked it instantly, and letting his arms fall, assumed an air of nonchalance.

"In sooth," he cried, with a shrug of his young shoulders, "I'll repent no more since my fashion of doing so displeases you. If, however, in future you like not my exploits, they will be pigs of your own sow, as the vulgar say."

With which last word he clapped to the door between his uncle's wrath and his own melancholy.

CHAPTER IV

A DAINTY boat was flitting over the moonlit waters of Massachusetts bay. It was a clear and gracious night. Across the sea was the rippling track of the moon, risen half-way to the zenith, showing as a great yellow disc upon the undefinable colour of the evening sky, while the woody islands smiled and smiled at the rippling waves singing at their feet. Nature was in her loveliest mood and cared not a whit that the boy in the boat was wild with agony.

As for the boy, he gazed unseeing upon that lovely scene, or with alarm looked at some familiar feature of it, which at the instant, to his disordered mind, assumed a strange fantastic aspect.

Human courage has little consistency. A man stands up bravely against the deadly fire of an enemy's guns, and shows himself a coward under the reproaches of a friend.

He rushes open-eyed into appalling danger and again hangs back trembling before some one of the minor ordeals through which men of less nerve pass without a quaver. Even that man of rock, the North American Indian, whose valour is proof against the fiercest torments of fire and famine, steel and tomahawk, is filled with an abject fear of invisible demons.

As for Jasper Annesley, though he had shown himself not without courage in some emergencies wherein courage was somewhat urgently called for, he was now palsy-stricken by evil Manitous of Puritan conjuring. Old Hollingsworth's words were ringing in his ears and he saw himself (a puny being in the great universe), the adversary of The Lord of Hosts. It was an awful thought, and he had endured it for three whole days and nights. These enemies, though invisible, were in the air around him. They were under the silver surface of the water, they were there in the good and

quiet sky. The islands hid them behind glistening cliffs, in dark caverns of rock, or somewhere in the shadowy spaces beneath the plumes of the pines.

Passing between the first twin islets of the ship-channel he perceived the sentinel pacing to and fro upon the ramparts of the fort. He knew the man well, having been instructed by him in the arts of war. From his bluff voice he had heard little but praise —praise of the accuracy of his eye, the steadiness of his hand, his strength and readiness, and the marvellous pliability of his frame—such endowments as the old soldier prized, but in his present mood, he would not have been surprised if the grim sentinel should turn upon him the guns set upon the fort to daunt the enemies of the Lord or the enemies of the Colony, and he breathed the more freely for having left Castle island in his wake. And now before him lay the loveliest island in the bay. Its shores were cut into many tiny capes and

coves, while tall bluffs rose from its eastern side to check the incoming tide of the sea. It bore on its back bosky woods with glades between filled with herds of grazing deer. Many a time he had chased them with arquebuse, from green end to green end fearing naught, but now with beating heart he drove his boat beyond the horror of its inky ambuscades. Then with a turn of the boat he beheld the long island to the southward, which raised its huge head threateningly from the sea.

Once in a furious midwinter storm rounding the point called Allerton, which, with death in its heart has set itself near the entrance of the bay, Jasper had been wrecked. Here, with one other that he had saved from the waves, clinging to the rocks he had faced death by cold and hunger and kept his courage to the end. Yet now, in that peaceful moonlight night he dared not so much as gaze upon it because of strange lights which played malignantly over it,

suggesting the most gruesome thoughts to his disordered mind. Veering to the left again, he sailed between Lovell's island and the Brewsters, keeping to the open sea. To little purpose, for the great watery waste was pervaded with his misery.

"I cannot bear it," he groaned. "I will end it in the sea." Yet as he leaned over the boat he involuntarily threw out his leg to keep the balance, and presently sat erect, holding his haggard face to the sky.

"No, I dare not die, for this pain which I deem insupportable is as naught compared with the torments of the damned. My soul is lost."

The sweat pricked out on his forehead and his agony choked him.

In truth he was in no reasonable frame of mind, for now suddenly beholding a dark object upon the water and hearing a shrill sound, he uttered an exclamation of alarm and sent his boat onward at full speed. Yet to the sane senses, that which appeared to

the eye was but a small boat and the shrill sweetness that trembled in the air only a woman's voice.

Annesley's boat was the lady of his heart, and served him in lieu of hawks, hounds, cards, dice, and the various amusements of the seventeenth century, which were prohibited to him by the laws of the colony. Upon it he had expended not only the ingenuity of his craft, for he was a ship-builder, but had found it a means of gratifying his artistic taste and the sentiment of the beautiful. A more lovely boat has never been seen in Boston Bay than this little skiff which in the grim old Puritan times fluttered over its waters. It was long, narrow, shallow, of most graceful lines, and designed to be used either as a sail or row-boat. If used with a sail it was partly managed by the weight of the body, and under the quick and easy handling of Jasper the various manœuvres were made without the help of a paddle. So responsive it was to

the slightest movement it seemed imbued with the property of life, and as it rose and dipped with the waves, or lightly skimmed over the sea, one fancied that at any moment it might spread its wings like a bird and fly skyward. None questioned the safety of this cockle-boat, for those were venturesome times and many a one as frail ventured outside the harbour. Its fantastic appearance, however, with its amber-coloured sail, and fluttering orange pennant, and perhaps still more the Pagan name *Ye Aphrodite* painted upon the stern, caused much head-shaking and evil prophecy.

Having for some moments driven the skiff on at full speed by an irresistible impulse, Jasper cast a glance behind him; and the other boat having floated into the track of the moonlight plainly revealed itself in its true character and innocence. Moreover the woman, whose sweet voice to his diseased imagination had been as the shriek of a fiend, was now standing upright in it, and having

made a trumpet of her hands sent to him unmistakable cries for help. Perceiving that he was simply flying from one in distress, he brought his boat into the wind and sailed back again.

The woman resumed her seat in her own boat which was still skimming over the golden ripples, and the moonlight that lay so broad and bright upon her discovered her to be the young maid whose beauty had been the unwitting cause of his humiliation. If Barbara Ryche had seemed beautiful to him in the prosaic scene on the wharf, how much more so in this aerial and enchanting medium, summoning him from the darkness of death, and proving in her own person the loveliness and worth of the world he would have left. Be her message to him what it might, the wind and his own will were bringing it ever nearer. The meeting in this vast moonlit solitude seemed fraught with such significance that he could but ill assume the calm manner he deemed

would serve best for her reassurance. If, however, Barbara had suffered any fear it was set at rest by his approach, and her voice had merely calm civility in it as she said:

"Truly, good sir, I fear I have brought you far out of your course."

"The course of a true man is ever where the weak and fair do need his help," replied Jasper. "Have no fear, Mistress, let thy destination be where it may I will count it no cross to see thee in safety there."

"Your fair speech doth give me good courage, else I would hardly ask your aid for such space of sea as I must pass. I would not willingly venture too far on a man's gallantry."

"Nay, I will serve you gladly for the whole length of your necessity, yet Mistress, I hope you have not set out for England on your own adventure, having already tired of this poor country of ours."

During this banter Jasper had tied the

girl's boat to his own and helped her to a seat in the bow of his. He now drew in his sail meaning to depend upon the oars, not wishing to be hurried by the wind to the journey's end. One unused to the rapid shifting from mood to mood in persons of his temperament might well doubt if this indeed could be the same youth, who with drooping head and terror-stricken eyes had so recently thought of plunging into the sea. He was intoxicated with this adventure so unexpected and inspiring. The incident had supplied him with a new emotion by which life took altogether another colour; nor would he soon forget the vision of this fair young woman, as she came to him through the spring night across the moonlit sea, her sweet face etherealised by the soft light which stole its bolder tints and made it like a silver lily.

"And now, Mistress," he said as he dipped his oar in the water, "you must have

patience, for 'tis a goodish distance to your uncle's island."

"Your words bespeak some knowledge of me. How do you know where I would go?"

"Why, I saw you on the wharf when *The Griffin* came in. Dost think one sees thee and straightway forgets? Verily there was speech enough concerning you, Mistress, among the bystanders, for 'tis not every day that a star of such brightness visits our humble town."

"And plenty of that speech was sour enough I'll warrant," the young woman commented.

"There be those that will cavil at the sun, which of a truth is somewhat too bright for blinking, bleared and rheumy eyes," Jasper replied with an evasion that did not escape the acuteness of his passenger.

"I knew not that a Puritan would humble his wit to the exercise of flattery. Marry, ye

are as nimble-witted a gallant as ever I saw at court."

"Nay Mistress," cried the youth soberly. "I speak but God's truth and no flattery, and truly you shall not be deceived in me after any sort, for I tell you plainly that I am held in ill-repute by all those ye style Puritans. Never will you hear good of me from their tongues, and much evil belike."

"That I will not," answered Barbara kindly, "or rather if I hear ill report of you I will give no credence to it, but set it down to the speaker's malice.

"That's not the nature of it either but some hitch perchance in mine own self. In all earnest I have tried to remedy this fault, but methinks 'tis in the pith of my bones,—and the worse luck, for a deal of trouble it hath made me. Zooks, Lady, if, as the preacher saith, trouble be our portion here below, I shall toss down my share of it henceforth with a jest and by the seasoning hide its noxious flavour!"

The young man rested upon his oars and with his words turned such a pair of devil-may-care eyes upon her as might easily belong to some rollicking cavalier.

"And now tell me," he questioned, "how you come hither at this hour in the night with none to serve you?"

"Because of the blood in my veins which often urgeth me into hazardous adventures," said the girl laughing. "The island was dull, the sea lovely and the handling of an oar seemed easy enough. I leave it to your own judgment if this arm of mine be not strong enough to hold an oar."

As she spoke, the court beauty threw back her mantle, and held out a most shapely arm. The sleeves of her robe were tied up with broad ribbon somewhat sumptuously wrought with silver, leaving it bare for the moon to gloat on from shoulder to wrist.

"A powerful arm I could swear it," cried Jasper. "'Twould hold a man like a vice, though I cannot answer for an oar."

"I'll warrant were I but practised in it, I could carry these boats on at something better than this snail's pace," said the girl more soberly. "Marry, now I come to think of it when first I saw you you did manage a somewhat fairer speed. In sooth, one would say some evil spirit, or a tempest at the very least, was chasing you, so that I did despair of all help or rescue."

"'Twas most unmannerly, forgive me," cried Jasper blushing till his shame even took colour in the moonlight, and speaking with winning earnestness. "My mind was sore distraught and I thought not of any blessing to be vouchsafed me."

"I did but speak in jest," she said. "As to this trouble of yours. If I make not too bold, what is the nature of it?"

"Why, Mistress, I would willingly confide it to you, who for all your young gaiety have, I perceive a soft heart and a wise wit, and so would perchance understand it better than another. Yet I would not spread

misery before the eyes of Aurora who should look only upon bright morning colours and fair scenes."

"Why now I think that your mythology be all wrong," observed Barbara smiling, "for as I remember, Aurora came to dispel the shadows, therefore by that analogy (since you do compare me to the goddess) you will do well to lay your trouble before me. In all seriousness I would fain give you a word of good cheer, if I might."

"You must know then," began Jasper who found in the girl's sympathy so frankly offered a delicious comfort, "that a short time erewhile, being concerned for my future state, and believing that God had performed a work of grace in my soul, I was minded to enter into the church covenant."

"Marry, I deemed the relation to be rather a matter of the heart than the soul," interrupted his fair listener, not without a tinge of disappointment in her tone. "The *soul* is rarely troublesome until one is of a

ripe age. You are too young and well-favoured a gentleman to think overmuch of religion. But go on, sir, what mishap had you to cause all this trouble ye speak of?"

"According to our church-way," continued Jasper, "one must first be propounded to the members for the purpose of giving fair opportunity for speech to any who knoweth a reason why the party desiring to be admitted be not qualified therefor. By heaven, sweet Mistress, there was not a slip of a sin since I ate green fruit by stealth to that day, that they did not pull out of their memories like rubbish out of a foolish housewife's bag, and all this cumbersome stuff must I again in some way dispose of, which labour caused me to think that were I ever admitted to the service of God I would be too jaded to work for him. At last all offences having been disposed of there remained as I supposed but the final ceremony at the meeting house; when lo, another charge was brought against me, which, as I

could not disprove it, and would not repent of it, put an end to the whole matter. And not an end either for it set tongues to wagging like leaves on a tree. Ah, 'twas no idle speech of mine, when I said you would hear naught but evil of me in the town. So, as thou seest, I was in sore trouble not only because I was under this reproach, but for the everlasting ruin of my soul."

"Was it then, in good earnest so grievous an offence?" asked Mistress Ryche.

"'Twas no more an offence than to praise the beauty of this fair night;" cried the youth hotly, looking with rapturous admiration at his companion. "Shall I defame the glorious moon that in climbing the heavens doth carry my thoughts upward, because forsooth 'tis left out of their narrow worship? I have said that the reason that I do oft fall out with my people is because of a hitch in mine own nature; but I do verily believe the hitch is rather in theirs who have

no true reverence for the beauty God hath made."

The girl smiled and nodded, as if to her mind 'twere no great fault in a man to have a taste for beauty.

Having passed around the point of Winthrop since named Shirley, the boats were drifting to the north of that narrow land-strip that shelters the island-home of Maverick from the force of the sea. Before the eyes of Mistress Ryche spread the vast ocean-plain, broken only by the broken crests of the waves which came tumbling at last upon the long bar. Around the inner bay stretched the line of the coast in a jagged scallop wherein the woody island seemed to float, while dim in the southern distance rose the domes of the Blue Hills. Untampered by man the tangled water-scenery and wild coast of Massachusetts bay had a beauty undreamed of by those who sail upon it now.

Reaching the island which had become

the dwelling-place of the court beauty they found Maverick with a negro just launching his boat to search for the lady who was his niece and ward. He welcomed Jasper with heartiness, offering him the hospitality of his house and the refreshment of a fowl and a cup of sack. The hour, however, was late, a visit to the fortress now must necessarily be short, and Jasper wisely postponed it to a future day.

"Farewell! sweet Aurora, who hath turned the night of misery I bore into bright morning and are Queen of my heart from this time forth," he murmured as the boat shot out again into the bay.

He was dizzy with happiness, yet his extravagant words held a measure of truth; for with the warmth and depth and sparkle of her beauty, with the fascination of her smile and speech, her preoccupation in the present life and her joy in it, Barbara Ryche had power such as no Puritan woman could have to take him out of his chilled and

gloomy world, releasing him from those terrible ideas that its religion had imposed upon him, and which seemed fast darkening his mind.

CHAPTER V

THE sail of *Ye Aphrodite* at Barbara's command, had been raised long before they reached the island, and as Jasper sailed away again Maverick and his niece stood on the shore watching the graceful skiff fluttering across the bay in the moonlight.

"'Tis passing strange," murmured Maverick as at last he turned his eyes upon her "that it should be yonder youth to whom you should owe your rescue. What do you think I heard in the town to-day, but that this fellow hath been refused admittance to the church because of some foolish speech he hath made about you."

"About me," she cried aghast, "and prithee what could he say about me for which they should so use him?"

"Oh merely such folly it was, as a fellow with any human nature in him might be guilty of. Love-struck, perchance Madam,

at the first sight of your witching face. It seems that the lad hath a taste for bright eyes and ripe red lips. In sooth, his religion is a little muddled and these sectaries here will tolerate no doctrines that differ from their own."

"The poor boy hath been very cruelly handled I think," cried Barbara after a pause in which she had recalled such confidences as Jasper Annesley had made to her, and had arrived at a fair understanding of the whole matter.

"I doubted not that you would take his part," said Maverick bending his keen eyes upon her; "'tis a woman's way, but 'tis a pity you do not favour the Puritans since one of them hath already bespoke your hand."

The girl drew her dark brows together and looked across the bay where the sail of Annesley's boat caught the light of the moon. "I fear but poor luck will attend his suit" was the sole answer she vouchsafed as she

swung herself about taking the path to the fortress.

"What, will ye not even ask the name of the gentleman who hath paid you this honour?" asked Maverick following her.

"Truly, it matters little to me. On my honour, Uncle, it shall never be mine and that I swear, for I do look upon these Puritans as traitors to our king, and bastards of the Church of England."

"Fy, girl, ye are over hasty. Pray look at the matter. Master Rutland is a gentleman of good quality, an honest, fair man not minded to go as far in length of tyranny as the greater part of them; and to give them their due these Puritans are very loving and tender toward their wives."

"Ah, I believe you," cried she with a world of scorn in her tone, "for did I not see yesterday in the town one of these same tenderly-loved wives standing in the market-place with a cleft stick upon her tongue, for no other fault either than scolding at her

husband. I'll warrant he had given her good occasion to rail at him, the coward knave."

The pair having climbed the steep path, had now reached the fortress, the door of which stood open showing the great hall or entrance room. Though of rude construction, it had an air of good cheer and to Barbara's eye was not without charm. The floor of this apartment was of puncheons laid below the sills, those great beams projecting over it into the room. On the walls were moose antlers, a rack of guns and many skins of wolves, bears and black foxes, primitive but not unpleasing decorations. One window set with glass, a rare luxury in the colony, and furnished with a heavy shutter, was the chief feature of the west wall, but at the seaward end were two narrow loopholes, suggestive of the time when the little fortress confronted almost single handed a savage world. Through one of these loop-holes fell a soft shower of moon-

shine upon Maverick's wife, a sweet dame who through all the roughness of her wilderness life had preserved the femininity of her nature, which is no uncommon thing, but also, which is somewhat rarer, its outward expression. It fell upon the flaxen head of a handsome boy sleeping soundly in the comfortable cradle of her arms, her broad white breast his pillow; and at her feet lay a hound with his nose between his paws. The moonshine was so bright as nearly to efface the light of two candles which, with a tankard and some writing materials, were placed upon a table by the fire-place. Here Maverick seated himself, while Barbara placed a stool at her aunt's side, and narrated her adventure. This was received with such exclamations of wonder and horror as became the part of a staid matron whose life was wholly passed in the practice of the gentle art of wifery.

"Ye have run a great hazard," Dame Amias said. "Why didst not take Scipio?"

"Why, see you not that the blackamoor was unsuited to the beauty of the evening?"

"Ay, child, but he is suited to the rowing of a boat. As for me, I would not venture upon the water without some one well skilled in the use of oars. But look ye at the child how sound he sleeps. He should be abed only that 'twould leave my arms empty. 'Tis a fine boy, Barbara, as ever ye saw, and how like his father he is."

"Why as to that 'tis thy own fair face over again. Never saw I a Maverick yet with that flaxy hair. But Aunt, if you like, he hath the Maverick temper. Twice have I see him to-day a-beating the 'moors."

"Tut girl, your uncle never beats them. He is of as soft a temper as any man that liveth, and never that I can remember cast a rude word at me."

"My uncle is as sweet-tempered a gentleman as the sun doth shine on. Yet methinks at the bottom of his patience one might find a very froward man."

"An she hath known me a half week," murmured Maverick, smiling to himself, over his writing.

"Didst ever mind, Barbara, what a strength this little one hath?" began the mother.

"Ay, to measure it by the 'moor's screams," answered Barbara laughing. "Truly he is as handsome a boy as ever I saw, and he hath grown to as goodly a stature as he hath had time for. His eyes be blue enough to anger the skies. His nose doth point the way to heaven, and he hath a mouth good for great pieces of pompion pie. Moreover, he is the owner of a deal of wit, and a rare little one to play. Now of a truth, aunt, have I said all I can think of; art satisfied? Heigho, what a fair night it is. Did ye ever sail over the sea in a shell of a boat with thy Samuel, ere he had a gouty foot and had forgot what the moon was made for?"

"And what think you that was, Mis-

tress?" asked Maverick turning his head within the circuit of his wide ruff to look at her over his shoulder.

"'Twas made to make dull-witted men talk prettily," she answered smiling.

"Oho, oho, you might say as well that an ear was made to hold pens on."

"Didst ever notice, Barbara," broke in the soft voice of Dame Amias, "the pretty dimple this little rogue hath in his chin."

"The dimple in the chin. Surely, I did forget it," said Barbara with a smile that ended in a yawn. "Ah, but 'tis a fair night, a fair night," and leaving good Dame Amias, she sauntered to one of the port-holes in which a glimpse of the moonlit sea was set like a gem. At last, when the child woke and his mother carried him to bed, she went to the fire-place and stood beside her uncle. Maverick had put by his papers, and now sat back in his chair with his cup of sack by his side and the hound fawning on his legs.

"Prithee Uncle," she began," hath Master Rutland a hand in the government here? Hath he been appointed to an office?"

"Before he went to England he served as an assistant. I doubt not he will be chosen again, for he is much trusted by the people of this plantation and some have even spoken of him for Governor."

"And you, Uncle, since you are a freeman, can you not be chosen to an office?" she continued.

"Not so long as I am a churchman and a good royalist to boot," answered Maverick frowning a little, and pushing the dog from his knee; "but, tut, girl, talk rather of the fair night and the babe's dimple."

"Were I a man and a member of this commonwealth, 'twould be a sore grievance could I take no part in the shaping of public affairs," she went on, not heeding his admonition. "Why, one might as well be a woman and so have done with it. Truly, Uncle, it stirs my temper that you, having

capabilities and property more than the common, should be left out of the state councils."

"Who hath been filling your head with such matters? Was it young Annesley? He will find himself in trouble if he be not more circumspect with his tongue. Did he profess himself discontented that by the law he is left out of civil offices?"

"'Twere natural if he, being a youth of lively parts and good education, should be so, but of a truth, Uncle, he said nothing to me of the matter. All I know is that were I in Master Annesley's place, or in yours, some measure would I take to force these tyrannous men to give me my rights."

"Verily, you do talk foolishness. 'Tis late and ye be better off a-bed. But, Barbara," he called after her as she was going to her room, "when young Annesley comes hither as he spoke of doing, you might sound him to discover whether or no his trouble with the church has bred in him any

such spirit as we speak of. Wilt think of it?"

"Yes, Uncle, perchance, am I not too busy thinking of the fair night and the babe's dimple," she answered with a bright glance over her shoulder.

CHAPTER VI

ONE morning two persons crossed the ferry that carried passengers from the peninsula to Maverick's island. They were English gentlemen, but of a different type from the chief men of the Bay colony. In place of the gravity of countenance and lofty port of the Puritans, they showed the more mobile face and manners of those whose talents are of a less solid and weighty order.

The elder of the two was a stout personage with a somewhat ruddy complexion, the tint becoming purple in the heat of controversy which gave him a factious look, but his expression was not without hints of both shrewdness and kindliness. His companion was of slighter build, with enormous black eyes that seemed to have absorbed all the colour and expression of his face. Notwithstanding the gravity of their business, his manner was as light as a boy's on a

pleasure trip, though by no means as unconscious, always having, as it seemed, a reference to those around him, so that though one might imagine him in various fine attitudes among his fellow men, it would be difficult to think of him quite alone, conducting himself with the simple sincerity that one observes in solitude. He was a man of talent, with the gift of oratory, but its force was weakened by a self-conceit that was continually working its way to the top of his speech like the beads in a glass of champagne.

The errand that took them to Maverick's island eventuated in a movement against which the government was soon up in arms. William Vassal and Dr. Child the two persons now crossing the ferry had nothing in common, however, with the religious fanatics who were continually stirring up the pool of Puritan politics. The cause of their dissatisfaction, which was well drawn up in a paper that was now in the doctor's pocket

being of a reasonable nature, the seeds of which were inherent in the system of government, and even in the first years of the commonwealth had been looked upon by some with suspicion as pointing to an oligarchical rule. In short, this paper was a draft of the petition that was eventually presented to the court, asking for the extension of the franchise, or in case of refusal to this request, to have all civil disabilities removed, with certain customs that bore hard on the disfranchised members of the commonwealth.

Having now reached the island, the strangers climbed the narrow path up the cliff to Maverick's fortress, and stopping to observe the view, perceived two figures—that of a man and woman on the little beach below. The youth—for the slender alertness of his frame, and the impetuosity of his gestures proved him to be in the hey-day of the blood—was apparently under that enchantment which makes one person only

worth looking at for he took no heed of them, though his companion gave them a fleeting glance over the shoulder that impressed the sense like the flash of an oriole.

"If women used their power as they might, 'twould be a queer world," remarked the doctor, falling into a graceful attitude and awaiting a second glance. "What would not yonder fool do at the bidding of his mistress?"

"'Tis a providence that loving is their sole trade," said Vassal looking with the composed delight of settled middle age at the loveliness of Mistress Ryche, perchance glad of a pretext for a halt in which to recover his breath.

"Truly, a woman's trade is to get a husband, and in the practice thereof she doth learn many a useful thing under the sun. Therefore, see you she has a cunning that, were she but fair enough and of good wit, might effect many a thing of great consequence—If," he added with his black eyes

still upon Mistress Ryche, "such a creature as that would but contrive with us, eh?"

His companion, however, had already gone onward, and having vainly lingered a moment for a second glance from the young woman, Dr. Child followed him.

Reaching the stronghold they found no one in the entrance hall save the hound, who sniffed about their legs, and eyed them with a silence that was felt to be not approval, but a mere suspension of judgment. Presently, however, Maverick's hospitable and hearty voice made amends for the dog's scant courtesy.

This was not the first time that the subject of the petition had been broached to Samuel Maverick, who notwithstanding his grievances under the existing government was not easily induced to oppose it. The time having now come to present the petition to the court, his signature to it as that of an influential public-spirited member of the commonwealth was eagerly desired and

Vassal and Child were determined not to leave the island without it. The day closed without his co-operation having been secured, but the inclemency of the weather gave them pretext for remaining and they had no doubts of ultimate success.

It was a wild night and a roaring fire lighted the long low room where Maverick entertained his guests. Though there was no lack of good cheer, on the edge of the evening Barbara slipped away from the little circle and went out into the storm.

Furious at her audacity, the wind seized her cloak, blowing it far behind her, lashed her hair about her face, and with angry violence opposed each forward movement. The primitive race-instinct for vigorous muscular exertion was strong in her, and the rigour of the weather that would exhaust a weaker organisation served only to make the blood circulate pleasantly in her veins.

Hardly had she reached the group of cedars, when the door of the fortress again

opened, and after wrestling a moment with the wind, a man stood upright sheltering his eyes from the storm. The figure had neither the fine proportions of Maverick nor the rotundity of Mr. Vassal, and was doubtless Dr. Child, who while waiting for Maverick's decision was passing the time in paying court to Mistress Ryche. The night, though so boisterous, was not quite dark, for the moon was near the full, and had Barbara not stood among the cedars he would have seen her instantly.

She thought that he would soon seek the shelter of the fortress again, but Child was of a more resolute humour than she thought, and though not of a physique to enjoy the buffeting of the storm, he had no more intention than herself to return to the house.

At length, in a desire to punish his persistence, Barbara set out for the bleakest part of the island. Gathering her cloak closely about her, she drove like a gallant ship aslant against the gale, with Child

fighting his way behind her. The pursuit, which was never capture, gave, no doubt, an extra zest to the exercise; at all events, having nearly returned to the fortress she allowed herself in good-humour to be overtaken.

"By my faith, 'tis a strange night for a pleasure-jaunt," said Child. "I trust you did not leave the cheer of the fireside Madam to escape poor company."

"I came for good exercise only and much have I profited by it," replied Barbara. "Being of a different build, ye may not know the great pleasure I have in beating through the angry wind. A man, and so born with the right to exercise your strength in many ways, how could you care as a maid doth, for that employ of active power which the tussle gives, and which she so rarely hath the sense of? Yes," she continued, "I do love a boisterous night, and, the fiercer the storm doth fling itself abroad, so much the more joyfully do I go forth to

meet it. Hear how the waves that oft-times do fret one because of their continuous drowsy plashing along this beach, do now come plunging in. Heigho, here's the wind again!"

She flung out her arms with a wild gesture turning her face to the gale, while Child watched her, fascinated by such excess of joyous vitality. At last he succeeded in drawing her from the battle-field of the tempest, to a more sheltered spot where the fortress broke the force of the wind.

"Why not use your power to some better purpose?" he asked.

"Why as to that, good sir, no way that ever I heard of is open to a woman to do aught with her strength but to beat the wind with it. What part has she ever but to stand by and watch the hurly-burly where men do fight and mightily strive in their own true cause?"

The girl's lips trembled for she thought of the queen, and, as many a time before, of her

own ill luck that she had not been born a man to fight for her.

With an exclamation of impatience she would have moved away, but he laid his hand upon her arm.

"A woman like Mistress Ryche has no need to stand by, so she chooses to use her power," he told her, and seeing that she listened to him continued. "Dost know on what errand Mr. Vassall and I have come hither? 'Tis concerning a petition for a settled form of government in this colony according to the fundamental laws of England, and for equal liberties for all loyal Englishmen of blameless lives without the imposition of oaths and covenants."

"'Twere a seasonable demand, for verily, the people here are ruled like slaves," said Barbara, "and a man, though never so loyal and pious a subject of King Charles, if he doth not subscribe to their church-way, no matter what be his rank nor the services he hath rendered to the state, is as one may say

a very outcast. Oft-times hath it angered me since I have been in the country, to see what injustice hath my uncle borne from these Independents, though he were 'stablished here, under the King's patronage, too, long before they came hither with their ill-gotten charter, which they make great boast of when it pleases them, and yet do many a thing for which there's no warrant in it."

"Yet for all this he cannot bring his mind to sign the petition."

"'Tis a very marvel. What make you of it?" asked Barbara.

"I doubt not he fears to jeopard his property, and is timorous of offending the magistracy," answered Child with a sneer, for he was at the extremity of his patience; then recollecting himself he went on, "I mean no disparagement, Heaven knows—Samuel Maverick is no craven, nor fond of Mammon overmuch. Moreover, there be usually more reasons than one why a man elects one course rather than another. Yet as to this

matter some things be plain enough, Maverick is of no contentious humour, by nature choosing to live peaceably if he can. He hath true friendliness, too, methinks, for the Governor here and doth dread his anger, and above all he fears to break his freeman's oath. Yet might he easily have taken the oath, believing that this government was to be administered according to the laws of England, as I believe was indeed the very case. Nor does the petition tend to any other thing than the public weal. But this man hath a very tender conscience, and hath ever felt himself bound to submit to all their arbitrary rules and laws, for which reason doth he pay his rates for the maintenance of ministers that yet will not receive him into their church—that do fine him roundly if he leaves before baptism be given to other men's children though 'tis denied to his own—but you know, Mistress Ryche, what be these grievances without my speech."

His voice was drowned in the snarling of the wind, but the grievances he spoke of were already fast in Barbara's mind as the resentment of them was in her heart.

"I am of your mind in this matter," she said when the wind abated. "Were I my uncle I would join you in any plot whatever against these insolent Puritans who do twist his life so out of the course he would have it run. Would he listen to me I could furnish him reasons enough for so doing, but that he will not."

"A woman hath no need to reason having been furnished with far prettier tools," Child rejoined with gallantry that was but wasted in the seriousness of her humour. "You know of them, fair Mistress Ryche better than I. But truly, there be no occasion to reason with Master Maverick, his own good wit will presently force him to sign the paper. Every time he doth look his children in the face he is urged to it, for then he doth no doubt say to himself: 'Shall not my

sons have at least equal privileges in this commonwealth with the sons of men who have not contributed a fourth part as much as I to its establishment?' But to return to yourself, Mistress, there be others you well might work upon were you disposed to it. Erstwhile you did seem to mourn that a woman hath to stand by while a man fights. Verily, if you will make our cause yours, you can find an outlet for all that pent-up energy which so troubleth you. With such courage, wit and beauty as might drive a man out of his manhood, or persuade him to the deed of a saint you are planned lady, for this very enterprise. What sayest to it?"

The court beauty was not one to hesitate, and no one thing was lacking to win her favour for this undertaking. Party-feeling, love of kindred, and the generous warmth of her nature that led her to resent the humble position in which Maverick was placed by Puritan law, as well as the opportunity it

offered for the gratification of the passion to act that was so strong within her, all urged her to join the cabal. Beside these motives there was still another—the desire to repair the injury to Jasper Annesley of which she had been the unwitting cause; and which was uppermost in her mind as she leaned toward Child and with quick breath exclaiming,

"Tell me the part you would have me take, sir, and, on the honour of a maid, you shall have no cause to complain that 'tis played without spirit."

CHAPTER VII

AMONG the persons who were in the church on that day when Jasper was charged before the assembly, there was one present who shrank at the unflinching rigour of the system that thus dragged an unoffending stranger so unpleasantly before the public eye. Although he looked upon the searching examination of applicants to the church as a necessary provision to keep its body pure, Master Rutland feared the effect upon Barbara of such an experience at the very outset of her life among his people.

While on shipboard he had made no proposal of marriage to her, being in honour bound by the trust Maverick had imposed upon him. But it would be strange if in the propinquity and leisure of that long voyage —in the unguarded moments of kindling love or later, under the impulsion of established passion, above all in times of danger when a

man's feelings burst through the restraints prudence imposes upon them, he had not once let his secret be guessed, all the more since Mistress Barbara was not unused to reading a man's heart. Now, however, having Maverick's sanction to his suit, he set forth to the island with the purpose of declaring his love for her. This was his whole purpose—not to ask for a disclosure of her heart for which he believed the time had not come. His idea of courtship might be irregular, but each step was planned with intelligence nothing being left to reckless impulse; and his air upon coming into her presence struck Barbara as that of a man for whose purposes it was folly to dig graves.

He found his mistress sitting at her aunt's wheel amusing herself with a not very successful attempt, as he judged, at spinning. The sumptuous figure of the court beauty in this modest and humble occupation in truth appeared somewhat fantastic. For she was clad in rich fabrics embroidered with flow-

ers in gold so that each movement made her figure glitter and sparkle. Nor could the splendid material extinguish the beauty of her face which in its exquisite colour and brilliancy triumphed over the richness of the stuff. Rutland, however, did not look his best in a room. Decorations, a gay company, and gossip do not bring out the best points of such men, and he looked misplaced in the picturesque comfort of Mavcrick's hall. A rugged coast with a foaming sea, a wide plain under a stormy sky, or better still, some great public arena where important issues were at stake and bold work done, made a more fitting background for him. Barbara remembered how when the ship had been attacked by Saracen pirates he had assumed control of the panic-stricken English. Then he had made a grand figure. His great frame had seemed none too large, and his steely blue eyes gleamed like the point of a sword.

As he seated himself opposite to her in

the high-backed arm-chair in which Maverick with happy grace was wont to take his ease, she could but see how lacking he was in the graces of the drawing room, how unable to bend himself to what is simply light and amusing, how careless of what is elegant and pleasing, too dignified and serious and unlike what she was pleased to term the true type and pattern of a lover.

The love of a man of his temperament, however, is all the greater because it does not compete with the countless impulses that scatter the emotions of a more delicate nervous organisation. In his rigid body was a heart of marvellous tenderness, and he was more occupied with what he deemed to be her perils than with his own sensations; a condition that is far from the egotism of youthful passion.

"I have not come at this time for thy answer," he said having in his simple and forthright fashion told his love for her, "I do not desire it, for how shouldst thou know

as yet aught of this new country or the life-way of its people, or whether or no thou couldst adopt one or the other for thine own? In due time I will have thy answer, but not now."

"As to this country, I know little of it," replied Barbara, glad to evade that other subject, in which indeed she had believed herself a proficient but which handled in the high fashion of Master Rutland seemed a new thing. "Thrice only have I been to the town, yet did I see and hear many things that did seem strange, and one that ye know of, Master Annesley, hath enlightened me much as to the ways and customs of the plantation."

She had removed her foot from the treadle of the wheel, but now set it in motion again with a push of her hand, and the gesture with the whirr of the wheel seemed to Rutland, somehow, painfully suggestive of contempt.

"I would sooner ye heard of us from one

less bitter than I judge Master Annesley to be at present," he answered. "Not that I do not compassionate the poor boy, nor fail to see that our church system bears hard on such moody persons, but this scrutiny is for the confounding of hypocrites who else might profess a love of religion for worldly purposes. Yea, I am truly sorry for him."

"There be scarce need of pity in this particular, for 'twould truly be a dolorous thing for Master Annesley were he to be received into this rigid and harsh sect, for he needs no harrowing creed, being by nature sad enough. Your people, Master Rutland, do seem to think their God is always a-punishing them. Religion should be a comfort, I think, not a plague to one. And now to be right fair with you," Barbara continued feeling safe to utter a heresy if it pleased her. "I have oft thought Master Annesley should be a papist."

"But thou hast not embraced that re-

ligion, as I have heard," said Rutland bewildered.

"Nay, what need have I of *comfort?*" And here the face of Mistress Ryche broke into a joyful smile, her eyes brimming with a sense of her own unfettered happiness, her arms flung carelessly backward, palms out, expressing all her indifference to spiritual things. "Nay," she added, "this glozing world doth content me marvellously well."

Mere physical loveliness independent of moral beauty had no attraction for Rutland, but he had seen in Barbara the qualities which make the framework of the ideal feminine character as he conceived it. Moral health and corporeal vigour alone commanded his admiration. He would not have understood the refined and nervous type of our day. Courage, energy, persistence, the sentiments of honour and personal dignity, these were the moral traits most esteemed by the Puritans, and of those

he believed she had her full share. Yet there she sat with the careless smile upon her lips and saying over again as if challenging a denial: "This glozing world doth content me marvellously well."

"And how long dost thou think such contentment with it could last?" he asked, his grave eyes holding hers. "Thou wilt come to know that the soul of man doth crave that which this world hath not to give, and though we be necessitated in our passage through it, to adapt ourselves in a measure to its conditions, yet do we not raise our souls above the low and worldly struggle, we be dragged down to the grave which is its sole end. For so I have seen a man swim toward some desired shore, but while his faculties all seemed put to the task of battling his way through the flood, while a ceaseless roar was in his ears and weakness continually did overpower him, yet ever did he keep his head high out of that deathly element and came safe at last to the green and shining

shore. And so was he able to climb wholly into the pure air that furnishes the breath of life.

"Nor speak," he went on beseechingly, "as a plague, of that religion which hath supported a great body of men and women through otherwise intolerable hardships. I do beg thee in all earnestness not to listen wholly and without good reflection to young Annesley. Wilt thou not give me also a share of thy attention; for as to the life and ways of this people, am I not as well qualified to show them forth, since love gives one the happiest skill to interpret? Above all I ask that thou shouldst show thy mind right plainly to me, never fearing to give pain or offense, knowing that more than all else do I desire thy trust."

"Truly, I meant not to speak ill of your religion," Barbara answered, shamed by his gentle patience. "It may be good and serviceable, I doubt not that it is so. Because a young filly will not be enticed into a narrow

stall is no proof that the stall is not right snug and desirable to those that be weary of travel. If I am like the young filly be not displeased."

"Yea, thou art very like the young filly," said Rutland, smiling. "Thou art young and frolicsome, but of good strength and courage, and such do make the fairest roadsters. Yet ere that time comes right fearful am I, that being so free to o'er-leap boundaries thou wilt find thyself in trouble. I fear thou art one who comes to a sense of spiritual things only through great pain and long seeking, and this doth lead me to say one thing more, without which my errand hither would be incomplete. I would have thy promise that, if trouble doth overtake thee thou wilt seek my help. Wilt thou promise me this?"

"Ay, that I will," replied Barbara with a readiness that sprang partly from a sense that with the promise would come release from Master Rutland's company which each

moment became more irksome to her, partly from a consciousness that his conduct toward herself was so much more honourable than her own toward him, and not at all with any serious thought of its fulfilment.

In regard to her behaviour, it must be said, that she had checked her first frank impulse to give him his true answer such as she felt it must be, and was guiltily conscious that she was taking advantage of his desire for its postponement, for interested purposes of her own. While, with such simple honesty, he had been declaring his love for her, she had considered how far such a man would stoop for the favour of a woman. Her idea of a man's love was that of the courtier and the cavalier—the love of such men as she had known—who would die for her, sell their honour for her, would do anything but be a true and tender friend. The new moral material baffled her.

"Thou dost well to trust me," said Rut-

land, taking the hand she extended to him as they both rose, and looking with pleased gravity into her eyes. "In return I do promise to give thee such help and counsel as my ability doth make possible, and to serve thee faithfully in all ways as a Christian gentleman."

And now having no other matter to bring forward, and with no habit of tarrying for mere pleasure's sake, greatly to her pleasure he went away.

CHAPTER VIII

BY the aid of a dainty cap and high ruff that hid the two lines between throat and chin that serves as a check-rein for her who would prolong her youth beyond its proper term, Prudence Garland seemed not to have passed the meridian of her charms, and if having seen the light of life and love die out of two pairs of conjugal eyes she had yet the desire for it, there was no reason that she should not make a third venture in matrimony.

To keep upon the safe side of the law, to say nothing of maintaining a reputation for piety and thrift, and yet contrive a costume that would gratify a taste for fine clothes, was not one of the least arduous occupations of our industrious ancestors. They must pick their way, too, among the prejudices of the rulers with caution, for while an extra slash in the sleeve might be endured, long wings appended thereto

would not by any means be forgiven, and though a woman might wear unchallenged a coif that was much embellished by embroidery or cut work, a "topish hat" would infallibly bring down rebuke upon the head of her who wore it.

Whether watchet-blue or peach-colour best suited the pink-and-whiteness of her skin was the subject of Prudence's speculations one morning soon after the arrival of *The Griffin*. She had brought a goodly store of finery from England, and now in the expectation of a call from Master Rutland which business necessitated, was choosing from it such a toilet as should make her most comely in his eyes.

Should she wear the watchet-blue bodice then, or the peach-coloured one? Come, come, it was a question that must be decided. The latter was of silk, while the blue was but of good taffeta, yet it was a sweet thing after all, and the widow conjectured of a more becoming hue to a complexion as

rosy as her own. Upon the tabs of the taffeta gown, however, were rosettes from which long ribbons hung, and alack-a-day these ribbons might seem to prove one as under the enchantment of a hollow world. Despite her misgivings Prudence attired herself in the silk, and for a moment regarded her image in the glass. Looking out of one bright brown eye with her finger to her chin, she seemed a happy, harmless little squirrel of a woman, but such simple creatures often manage their own affairs with astonishing skill, and dame Prudence cast a glance to that other looking so admiringly at her out of the mirror, as to an accomplice and who alone knew the shrewd business she had done in her day.

"A plague on't," cried she, nodding and frowning in her perplexity. "I misdoubt if good Master Rutland would not look upon these dainty gauds as sinful vanities, and he thinks that I should better concern myself with my spiritual clothing. Yet I

have oft seen that however sincere be a man's piety he is ever prone to choose a comely woman to wife rather than an ill-favoured one, let her saint's robe be as white as it may. Ay, ay, I'll venture to wear the peach-colour, for the rustle of the silk is like music in mine ear."

The long-deliberated question, like more important ones, was settled at last off-hand, for the sound of one seeking admittance to the inn, which, being the daughter of the landlord, was Prudence's home, with the possibility of Master Rutland's arrival, put a sudden end to her perplexity, and sweeping her superfluous finery into the chest, she was seated at her wheel with her whole mind, as it seemed, on her spinning, before her visitor was shown in.

The loud rap at the inn door, however, had not been given by the strong hand of the magistrate, but, by the dainty one of Mistress Ryche, who now advanced into the room with the air of joyous friendliness that

could be found in no other throughout the length and breadth of this grim little Israel.

"Only a blind man need inquire after your health," she cried, regarding her friend who of a truth, wore a somewhat warmer colour than the brisk Boston air was answerable for, "but you did have a cruel time at sea. Why, truly, now I never dreamed, Gossip, you had by right such a pair of roses, and in the colour of the silk, ye have hit upon the very hue to match 'em. Ye be daintily apparelled, upon my word."

"Sith it pleases you, it must indeed be of the best fashion," replied Prudence with a sigh of satisfaction that she wore peach-colour that day. "Some do seem to think that new fashions and pleasant colours go but ill with the heavy heart which a widow doth carry with her, yet I think there be little sense in denying to her the cheer there may be in a bit of bravery."

"Sooth, she needeth it sorely," Mistress Ryche admitted with a gleaming smile, for

in Prudence's conversation and conduct she had found signs of a willingness to be lightened of that burden she carried. Leaning forward, she laid her hand on Prudence's knee:

"Let me whisper a word in your ear, Gossip. I ne'er waste my pity on one who but mourns for a husband or wife, nay, I do save it for those who are in sore trouble—who have lost perhaps a great-uncle or a cousin in the third degree."

At that moment, checking Barbara's raillery, a second visitor was shown in—one that answered no better to the expectation of Prudence than the first.

It was Jasper Annesley, who, bearing a message to Goodwife Garland from old Hollingsworth, could hardly credit his good fortune in finding so lovely a thing as Barbara Ryche illuminating the dreariness of the path of duty.

The whole aspect of Jasper had undergone a change since the day he had been

called to account by Hollingsworth in the assembly, for now he was all smiles and happiness. The blood had received an impetus that sent it bounding through his veins and gave a buoyancy and new charm to every movement. His very apparel had a gaiety in it that considered not any sumptuary law requiring one to prove his income proportionate to his expenditure; and his well-made young figure carried off its gay trappings with such ease and galliard grace as would become any jewel of the court, the which his mistress did much marvel at.

At sight of her he drew his buckled shoes together and bowed to the ground. The court beauty stood likewise and returned his salute, curtseying low, while Prudence, rising from her wheel, seemed about to follow suit, but finally chose a more Puritanic greeting.

Having delivered his message Jasper accepted an invitation to be seated, placing himself upon a stool opposite the chest

whereon Barbara sat in the face of the light streaming in through an open window.

Between her and Jasper stood Prudence's wheel, at which that industrious dame continued to spin—to the young man's mind a most sacrilegious proceeding in the presence of this divinity. But above the wheel rose that face which, whether it was his bale or his blessing, he would travel miles to look upon, and above its humming he could hear those her honey tones. Moreover, she was in a bland humour. Smiles were in her eyes and on her lips, nor were they all for Goodwife Garland.

The conversation ran at first, upon the plantation, of which, whether because familiarity and the bright spring morning had improved it, or because of a desire to make herself agreeable she spoke only in praise.

"'Tis as I think a goodly town, and there be many persons here of good fashion and true piety," said Prudence, with whom things spiritual and things material had a

way of mingling. "I would you dwelt here rather than upon that lonely island."

"I find not the island lonely. We have many visitors, and mine uncle is a host in himself," she assured them, giving Jasper the opportunity to say,

"Master Maverick is accounted a most hospitable gentleman, and is of a most courteous and loving disposition. I make no doubt, lady, 'tis in the blood."

A soft glance she cast him from beneath her long lashes, but left his compliment unparried in her desire to speak seriously.

"Mine uncle is a good and honourable man. He hath a merry heart and a generous hand; and though the first be not thought so commendable by some, marry, the last is ne'er refused by any. As for hospitality, 'tis a virtue that should be in every true gentleman, though I have heard that 'tis not in good repute among some who call themselves by that name."

"It might be grandson to human charity,

son to kindness, and cousin to a rabble of pleasant virtues that have a worldliness in them that giveth rise to the belief that the stock hath degenerated. As for me, lady, I pick no quarrel with such virtues as do have for their chief object nothing more heroic than the enlivening of our journey through this vale of tears. Have ye not taken note of how fain am I to profit by the hospitality which Master Maverick doth offer. Oft hath it puzzled me to find that others do not the same."

"We have at present stopping with us two gentlemen of your mind. A Master Vassall from Plymouth, and also a smart young doctor of physick, a Dr. Child, who hath taken his degree at Padua, as he told me, and who is very well conceited of himself, as I saw for myself. For all that, he is a most proper man to find in a rough new country. On the honour of a maid, Gossip, I would you could see the gentleman."

"Is he of good estate and of godly conversation?" asked the widow.

"Well, of that I am no fair judge," answered Barbara with a ripple of laughter in her voice, and a shrug of her shoulders. "'Tis gallantry rather than religion I look for in a young man. When he is too gouty and crabbed for the one 'tis time to improve himself with the other. This young doctor comes from a town called Hingham, so he tells me. Doth know aught of any such plantation, Master Annesley?"

"'Tis not so far from our own that the ill-fame of it hath not reached me," he answered in no gracious tone, but in a moment he rose, and picking up the scarf which she had dropped replaced it upon her shoulders in a way so endearing that she forgave him for his petulance.

"There is a large disaffected party in that place that has put our magistrates to a mort of trouble, to which party this gallant

of yours doth in all likelihood belong," he said.

"And what cause for grievance had they?" she asked, looking up into his frowning face.

Prudence, also struck by his grace and beauty, stopped her wheel and stared as if she saw him for the first time. He had not reseated himself, but stood leaning against the wall in the stream of sunshine beside the court beauty. They made a rare pair to look at, she with her joyance and exquisite loveliness, he, with the frown curving over his faun-eyes, and jealous anger mantling the soft brown of his cheek.

"And prithee what might their grievance be?" she asked again, half-smiling at his moodiness.

"In the beginning 'twas a foolish quarrel they had among themselves in the choosing of their chief military officer," he began with a high disdainful air. "The magis-

trates having confirmed the choice of one party, the other did show a hot temper and denied the right of the magistrates to set aside their choice, making many seditious speeches. Among this contentious party was the minister of the town, one who hath formerly been suspected of having a leaning toward the church of England, who when the marshal came to him to collect his fine did answer that the warrant was insufficient, not being sent out in His Majesty's name, and that the government here have not power by virtue of the patent to do many things they do. I would advise you therefore to beware of any you meet from that factious town."

"And why, think ye, Master Annesley," cried Barbara stiffening a little, "that the young gentleman I speak of, must necessarily be of the party which doth so excite your ire."

"'Tis questionable for what he leaves his

calling for days together unless it be to stir up fresh contentions," he answered with a shrug. "I bid you beware of him Madam."

"Ye be troubling your brains in the matter more than reason doth require," she made rude answer, her temper moved by this haphazard word that came so close upon the truth. "Moreover, 'tis a point of honour with me to listen to no disparagement of those I count my friends. Dr. Child is a gentleman of good quality, Sir, a man of honour and wit, and master of many accomplishments, such as serve to make the time go merrily. He useth fair language to all ladies, with pretty conceits and figures and hath a voice for a song that would melt your heart, good Master Annesley an' thou hast one."

"Once I had one, I can swear to that. If now I have it not 'tis not you Mistress, that should scoff at me that I am heartless."

"Ay, Ay, Goodwife Garland and I know that ye have a good honest heart. Ye need

not so speak up for it," cried Barbara laughing.

"As for this gentleman, this nonpareil, I profess I would fain see for myself if he be indeed such a paragon, or owes his excellence in part to your good favour. Wilt some day bring him with you to the inn, Mistress?"

To this request of Prudence, Barbara was only too willing to say yes, and before she left, a time was set for such an interview as she desired.

Hardly were the arrangements completed when the expected guest, for whom so much preparation had been made, arrived, and Jasper and Barbara left the widow all smiles and peach colour to the society of Master Rutland.

CHAPTER IX

HAVING left the ordinary and come out upon the street, Barbara and Jasper looked at each other with significance.

"The widow is a simple soul," said Barbara, "and never in my life did I read 'good riddance' more plainly writ on a face. How clearly is it the part of wisdom to show forth the wish in one's heart as children and fools do! Think now, how another, perchance thought more wise than she, would have concealed from us her desire that we should be gone, and mayhap we should be there yet spoiling her good pleasure and we wishing ourselves far away."

The young fellow shrugged his red velvet shoulders.

"I know not why, but I did ever distrust the woman. She useth fair language but 'tis like the creeping of some clammy creature over one's flesh. Yet, after all I have

no reason to speak ill of her since 'tis owing to her that I have the joy of this moment."

"So waspish were you erstwhile, one would never suppose my company bearable to you."

"'Twas because of your confidence in that crafty factionist looking and prying into opportunities of persuading people to their own undoing. Verily, Mistress, 'tis dangerous business choosing friends so at first hand."

"When did'st find out this sore fault in me?" demanded Barbara cruelly. "Was it when I made your cause mine at our first chance-meeting in the great lonely waste of the moonlit sea? Though I did but seek to give you good cheer and courage, perchance even then ye deemed me over-bold."

"Not so," cried Jasper earnestly, "you came to me like a blessed angel bidding me believe one friend I had on the cruel earth, which in sooth made a heaven of it. What marvel is it if the fear ye did but make a

fool of me for your own sport doth sometimes put me in a bitter humour?"

"'Tis the first time I ever heard of a 'blessed angel' making a fool of a man for her own sport or aught else. Surely 'twere more like an imp o' Satan. But truly now," Barbara went on with a sweet seriousness that put to rout all Annesley's ill humour, "you were not wrong in thinking that I did come to you as a good friend. I have dwelt on the ill usage you have endured till 'tis like my own proper grievance, and for your sake do I hate this arrogant folk."

"Have a care, Mistress, have a care, else some passers-by may catch a word that will get you into trouble," interrupted Jasper; for she had spoken with such emphasis and distinctness that a grim goodman, who had been passing with a kit of tools, looked after her with a frown.

"A plague on them all!" she grumbled. "Can we not take some lonelier way, where

we may speak freely without fear of offending Puritan ears?"

Such suggestions are never reluctantly acted upon by a lover, and in this case Jasper was most happy to escape from the streets, where he was momentarily in danger of being denounced as a truant and idler. Taking their course through the School Lane, they came to a little footpath leading to the beacon that the saints had set upon the highest point of Trimountain. Notwithstanding the fact that fifteen years had passed since the Puritans had taken possession of the peninsula, this path-way was hardly more than a trail still choked in places by the barriers of the wilderness, and altogether unlike such "lover's lanes" as in civilised countries young pairs appropriate to themselves. Easy it were, to fancy a young savage weary of the hunt, glutted with war-victory, on such a spring morning pursuing some comely brown maiden

over this wilderness tract. For Love has a vast kingdom, with subjects in places undreamed of by his sleek courtiers—subjects that wear no external decoration but bear his burning badge in the bosom.

This hill-side with its covering of stag-horn sumach and prickly thickets of wild shrubs would have made a more fitting back-ground for those savage lovers than for these that now wandered there. Near the top of the hill where the beacon was swung, a huge boulder thrust itself out of the verdure and there, alternately warmed by the sun and chilled by a breeze that still had a memory of winter in it, the young pair rested.

"The town hath a long arm, if so be it can reach us here," said Barbara smiling and pointing to the cluster of buildings that marked the settlement. A poor figure the little town made from this height, nor was it strange if she did not see in it the brave vanguard of civilisation, nor realise that the

march begun before the dawn of history was not to stop short here on the confines of this wilderness; but that it would soon swallow up the nook where they sat now so remote from it and the tide would still flow on north, south and westward till the wilderness would be a wilderness no more, but the fatherland of a new nation. This wild spot where these scorners sat, about which the wolves still prowled, and near which the Indian might sometimes be seen, was to be the park of a city—a bit of the wilderness saved and tamed, where the descendants of these wild desert birds whose glees made a part of the beauty of the spring morning, should sing their silvery strains to coming generations with scanter opportunities to learn the sweetness and wildness of nature.

Mistress Ryche had taken this long walk in the desert for a definite purpose, and now, judging the distance between herself and the town great enough, laid her hand

upon her companion's arm and spoke openly:

"Truly, my friend, you are of too tender a make-up for this boisterous country. Ye who have so many gifts have yet no place in it. By my faith, in Merry England in the olden time, have I known many a pretty fellow like yourself who has conquered London town by his wit. Yet not many a one either, for though nature doth provide sober brown wrens in plenty one sees but rarely a golden bird like that glittering beauty who is like to split his throat on yonder bush. And now let me whisper a thought lest some rabbit do but scud with it to the town and I be clapped into the stocks. Methinks, friend, ye should be a papist. In the ceremonials of that church ye could find somewhat to satisfy that craving of yours for what is beautiful, but what can a poet do in the grim ugliness of the 'true faith?' And, Marry, good sir, when the mood was

on, ye could slip in a little sin and be none the worse for it."

"And dost thou think, then, that my religion should be like an indulgent old nurse, and that I must be allowed the evil one himself if I cry for him sometimes for a playfellow?" asked Jasper.

"Do I not know that in the quick play of your moods, now and then an extreme wild one comes uppermost," she said. "You are not made to twang ever upon the same string; and by a sin, I meant not an ugly monster that would make one shudder, but a pretty darling that only a harsh old Puritan would ever have the heart to smother."

"'Tis well, indeed, I have brought you hither. Thy speech is heathenish!" cried Jasper, but he smiled tenderly upon her, nor did he make an effort to argue the point. He lay in the hollow of the rock, his comely head in the bend of his arm, sensible only of an atmosphere of kindness and a world of

beauty. He did not care for moral questions, for reflection and effort, but only to enjoy through the senses and the imagination.

For the earth had flung off its dumb sleep and the hill was clad in a feathery robe of innumerable spring tints. At its base flashed the bay, the colour of a swordblade in the sun, with the islands green as emeralds floating upon it. But for the narrow marsh strip that led to Roxbury, the peninsula also might be an island, no doubt would in time become so had not man arrived to fling the hills into the wide estuary of the Charles River that was fast eating its way across the neck to meet the battering tide of the bay. A flat of sandy beach and weedy marshes lay at the foot of Trimountain to the west. Here at a somewhat later date criminals were buried and gruesome sights were sometimes seen of corpses protruding from too shallow graves, but the present moment was

a tender interlude between the ferocity of savagery and the deeper tragedy of civilised life.

From the contemplation of this virgin scenery Jasper turned to his companion. The pause had not lasted a moment, but already the thought she suggested was forgotten. He raised himself on his elbow to look more closely into her face and murmured in a tone as innocently caressing as one uses to a bird held lovingly against the cheek.

"Mistress, thou art of wonderful loveliness. Never saw I a face that could so endure the searching light of broad sunshine, for the sun's rays that do greatly beautify every other object of nature (so that the bird, the flower, the gauzy-winged insect, ay, even the insignificant pebble beneath the feet all take on new beauties under its glittering light) is singularly unkind to the poor human face. It doth twist the features and betray

flaws in the fairest skin; but thine, I swear, is as flawless as the petal of a flower. Thy bold eyes will not admit that the sun hath a fiercer spirit than thine own. Now here's a marvel!" he went on bending yet nearer to peer into those unshrinking depths. "I did think thine eyes of the darkest brown, but now I perceive they are of divers colours but with a play and sparkle like a gem, yet a gem that hath a soul in its pure depths. Verily, I do believe there was never before such a pair of eyes."

His praises deepened not one whit the soft pink of the court beauty's cheek, and her air was so absent that 'twas a question with him if she had paid him the honour to listen.

"I came hither to speak with you in all seriousness—not to listen to such babble," she said. "Tell me, you who are never two minutes in the same humour, doth it never chance that you feel within you a desire to play a part in this new country? Doth no

ambition ever stir thee to climb up into one of the high places?"

"Sweet mistress, you mock at me," replied the youth reproachfully. "Now thou art truly unkind since you know that all ye speak of is forever impossible for me."

"Nay, I know not what the future holds. I but know that at this present time by the unjust laws of this colony you assuredly have no scope for your talents, and being your true friend the knowledge of it doth vex me grievously."

"Friend! I am sick of the word," exclaimed Jasper jumping to his feet in a sudden rage that was like a flash from a clear sky. "I hate the word. 'Tis like a blow in the face."

"And erstwhile ye were well pleased with it," she answered looking up at him with a serenity that only vexed him the more. "See now what a fine weather-cock ye be. Fy, whene'er he is vexed, is a man to fire his blunderbuss, the bullets to fall upon

whomsoever they may? In very truth I have little relish to have my friendship so flouted."

"When one's heart is afire with love, the word 'friendship' hurts. Hast thou not a warmer throb in thine for me than friendship stirs? Canst thou not love me, sweet Barbara, even as I have long loved thee?"

He dropped back into his former place on the rock getting as near her as he dared.

"Nay, ye must take what I offer or naught," answered Barbara frowning, but looking into the boy's white face, she went on in a kinder tone. "See now, how unreasonable ye are! Such a feeling as ye speak of is against nature. Though we be of an age, thou art yet in the play-time of life, while I am long already a woman. 'Tis action and purpose that pleases me best in a man. I would have him too full of energy and enterprise to fold his hands because circumstance doth oppose him. He should

be a stout fighter, if not with the sword yet with his wit, but ye be yet in the humour of a boy."

"If 'tis the humour of a boy to love thee better than his own soul," he cried, and his great soft brown eyes rested upon her with a look that appealed to something in her own nature that was not love yet was strong and warm and made her answer difficult.

"Verily, boy, I believe ye are of good mettle," she said. "A man should love and hate, each excellently well. Nor did I think to scorn you, for well I know that when ye be a man you will be bold enough. Ay, the blood will circulate in your veins and you will live—and not as a slave either. But come," she exclaimed in a voice from which the earnest note suddenly dropped. "The air is tart, after all. Let us set forth again."

"Sooth, the air is much like thyself, sweet mistress, balmy and sweet till one is ready to swear that summer hath come,

yet when one doth confidingly abandon himself to the warm atmosphere, lo! an east wind suddenly blows and chills one to the marrow of his bones."

CHAPTER X

JASPER took his mistress by the malt-house road as the loneliest way to the ferry. The long walk under the warm sun now at its meridian, the exhilarating presence of his mistress, had so thoroughly warmed his blood that it seemed impossible he could feel the influence of the black pine.

As they walked, he described the stern beginnings of the plantation, when a white man's life was but an experiment that might at any moment end tragically; when his gun must always be loaded and within reach; when the wind rustling in the trees brought a woman's heart to her throat, and the baying of wolves was often the baby's lullaby.

"Well do I remember the day, when with my parents, I first looked upon this desert place," said he coming to experiences that were more personal. "'Twas a day in mid-

summer. The air clear except for the shimmer of heat in it. The sun did fall in dazzling sheets upon the greenest world ever I saw, which in sooth is not to say much, for being not more than five years old, I had seen naught but London which is my birth-place. Not only were my eyes bedazzled, but I found the breath of this wilderness marvellous sweet. Ah, do I not even now perceive that delicious fragrance again? No, for the grape hath not yet its blossom time, nor have the acorns formed upon the oaks. Mistress, dost know the exceeding sweetness of the acorn when it is young? On that day I tell you of, it did mingle pleasantly with the fragrance of the grape, and steaming in the hot, hot sun were the aromy herbs in which this land doth abound. Though I be accounted now but a dullard, verily I was then a smart young knave, for having once got on land and upon my legs, the first use I made of 'em was to run away into this sweet blooming

golden-green world. A gay little creature in a gray fur coat did first allure me, and when the squirrel after rating me well for my pains in following him, did dive into some hiding place, I did follow a flock of little birds all painted in orient colours that flitted in companies through the copses. Ay, 'twas a rare day but did end sadly with stripes. Though I had justly earned them, I'll warrant, they would have been spared me had my father known that he would die on the morrow, and that the only memory of him I would carry through life would be of the beating he then gave me. Though my father did come to this country for high purposes, sweet mistress, yet it turned out 'twas for naught but to beat a truant child. Verily it doth seem to me God doth make many a mock at us. As for my mother who had come over all these sea-leagues for that she could not live away from my father, she did have his company for those four and twenty hours only. My mother was an un-

willing soldier in this wilderness struggle. With many tears she had come hither, and her banner did often trail woefully in the dust. Once I did hear my uncle chide her for a coward, and never shall I forget the quiet answer she made him. 'Yea brother,' she said, 'I find in myself a craven heart which doth put me to shame, yet be it commendable to face danger with a stout courage, surely it be no less so in her whose heart is like to faint.'

"My uncle had scant patience with her, and when she died which happed in a twelve-month he did take me as an unwilling legacy, to be brought up to serve God in the true faith as she did desire.

"Perchance ye have seen little birds taken from their nest in the green tree-top to be trained, and ye know how it oft fares with them. Fear is the first lesson they learn, and learning that they can never learn another. And the saddest thing is, that the creature that was to be so proficient

above its fellows does lose its natural powers and learns not even to fly and to sing."

"Nay, 'tis not too late for him," cried Barbara taking advantage of this discontent. "The bird shall fly and sing yet. Listen then and you shall hear what hope there be of it. Let us rest in the shade of this goodly tree, and I will tell you pleasant news."

As she spoke they stepped into the shadow of the black pine.

"How now?" she asked seeing him shiver, "have ye blood like a frog that this long travel hath not served to warm it?"

"'Tis not always the cold that curdles a man's blood. There is a saying that if ye shiver when ye be warm, 'tis a token some one is walking over your grave, though 'tis foolish persons mostly who doth credit it. Nay, sweet mistress, I lay it rather to this grim old pine-tree which hath an evil spell over me. Tell me now that thou art quite

within its shadow, doth not thy flesh creep? Do ye not feel the spell?"

"Truly I do not," answered Barbara looking up into the dusky foliage of the pine. "'Tis no magician—this tree, to practise black art upon us, but a good old tree by the way, offering a cool resting place from the noontide sun. Come then and rest."

Could it be that a sunbeam had actually penetrated the thick foliage of the darksome pine and illumined the girl or was it that her light and brilliance dispelled the baleful gloom of the tree? Nay, it was simply the tenderness and sympathy that emanates from a warm heart and which Jasper felt as heat-waves, and which at last emboldened him to venture into that chilly nook—even to sit down on the spot where the gloom was densest.

"Ye must know then," Barbara began with that radiance of hers that was no mere

lip-smile but the splendid effulgence of a rich and warm personality, "that there is a plot a-foot among some who are tired of this grim rule of King Winthrop, to modify in some part this arbitrary government. I pray you, Master Annesley, do you not think there be many among the people of this colony that be discontented with the government here?"

"Verily I do. There be thousands of discontented persons who chafe bitterly at being kept out of church covenant and civil offices. That I know well."

"I also know it," cried Barbara, "because I know human nature. I'll venture to say, Master Annesley, that when ye are ready to take a man's part ye can find scope for your talent."

"And dost think any such plot as ye speak of can avail aught? The magistrates have all in their own hands, even to a law that means death to any that do plot against

them. And though many be discontented yet will they not jeopard their lives by such a conspiracy."

"If they all be cowards," cried Barbara with bitter scorn. "Surely 'twere strange if so many as ye speak of be willingly ruled like slaves and submit in silence to all that tyranny can afflict. But 'tis folly to discourse of such things to a mere boy and one that doth choose to live under the heel."

"Nay, thou shalt not scorn me, Barbara," he cried passionately, put on his mettle by the girl's goading tongue. "Thou art all wrong. I did speak but for others, not for myself. I know the temper of this people better than you can know it, and I tell thee never will the body of them be prevailed on to oppose the government. They who have persuaded you contrariwise have deceived themselves and you. Moreover, 'tis only you Mistress, that shall put the heel upon me."

At this show of spirit, Barbara's frown vanished, she looked at him with a new expression—a kindness that was not mingled with compassion. "Forgive me if I did wrong you," she said, "and now listen, for time passeth and I would tell you the whole purpose of this conspiracy."

"Oh, if thou hadst but chosen any other place for it—any other place in the whole wide world but just this cursed spot under the black pine!" exclaimed Jasper in sudden agitation, for again he felt himself under that chilly depression that he ascribed to some occult property of the tree. He hastened back into the warm sunshine holding out his hands entreatingly to Barbara.

"Come away," he besought her. "Let us go onward ere thou discoursest to me longer of this plot. Since 'tis disclosed to me here, as I live I believe 't'will prove to be the cause of my undoing."

"Marry, was ever a body so fanciful!" grumbled the girl. "In good earnest, such imaginings be a sad hindrance to a man. Therefore come back and listen to me here in this very spot, and thereby cure yourself of such folly." Seeing him so troubled she rose and went out into the sunshine where he stood, and between jest and earnest leading him back again under the tree.

"You must leave me your hand," he said as they reseated themselves. "Your dear warm hand with its friendly touch doth impart some much needed vigour to my system. Leave it to me that I may have any heart to listen."

Having laid before him the purpose of the conspirators, Barbara put the question to him whether he would join them.

"Ye drive me too hard, Mistress, ye drive me too hard," the young man groaned. "This petition is treasonable."

"Treasonable!" she exclaimed scorn-

fully. "'Tis these fanatical magistrates only that be chargeable with treason. Is it treason to petition? Then 'tis indeed a tyrannous government."

"Surely your uncle who hath taken the freeman's oath, he cannot sign this petition?" cried Jasper.

"He hath signed it and hath had grievances enough for doing so. Think you, Master Annesley, that the magistrates here would in good earnest put a man to death for such cause?"

"Verily they have warrant for it," he answered gloomily, "yet I know not whether they would proceed to such lengths."

"I myself do greatly doubt it," said Barbara, "but whatever be the risk to-morrow the petition is to be presented and copies of it to be circulated. If so minded, ye could do good service by distributing them among those ye spoke of as discontented. How is

it? Art thou with us or no?" she asked once more bending upon him her dark magnetic eyes.

"Thou knowest I have no grievance," he murmured.

Alas! what petitions did he care for save such as should be addressed to her? What privileges did he lack save those of an accepted lover? Yet, he thought, though the latter were not to be vouchsafed him singly the two might come hand in hand.

He lifted her fingers to his lips and kissed them while he scarce could see her face for the daze of trouble in his eyes.

"Sweetheart," he said, "my life is thine to do with as it pleases you."

And so they went out again into the highway and the old Puritan tree was left to shake its darksome head and murmur maledictions on all such enemies of the chosen people.

CHAPTER XI

WHILE the colonists were laying the foundations of that social structure that was to endure for years and purposes far beyond the reach of their guesswork, while by a mixture of meek words and bold acts they were eluding the grasp of the mother-country, while they were establishing industries, encouraging commerce, defending their vaguely drawn grant, suppressing disorderly neighbours, establishing their ecclesiastical polity, disciplining church members, and punishing heretics, they yet found time for love making, or not to give too frivolous a name to it —for courtship and marriage. Cèlibacy to the colonist is but another name for discomfort, and when the broad geniality of the Elizabethan age had given place to Puritanism, men became thoroughly domestic. The interval, therefore, between the departure of a wife for Paradise and the in-

stallation of her successor was shortened to a period not at all in accordance with modern ideas of propriety.

Rutland's wife had died long before his departure for the new world, and the obstinate celibacy of a man so well able to take upon himself the cares of matrimony—(a man, too, to whom had been granted a good share of the town's land and who dwelt upon it alone in a dwelling than which there was none larger or better fitted for family use in the plantation) might even occasion the remonstrances of these whose high office entitled them to speak upon a matter that so closely touched the town; but if so, it had been so much wasted breath.

This dwelling was set wide of the street, a fashion which gave a dignity to many of the plain and humble buildings in the New England plantations. When this space was terraced and adorned with slender smooth-stemmed trees and set with shrubs and flowers, it was often the most cheerful feature of

the Puritan homestead. Pressed by political and personal business, however, and with no especial incentive to push on the work of such ornamentation, the space in front of Master Rutland's house had long been left in as wild a state of nature as the tangled thickets that lay behind it to the very head and shoulders of Shawmut. It was in the vernal of the year 1646 that the first effort was made to reclaim this little plot from the rudeness of the wilderness. Here on this fair page, all that spring and summer Rutland wrote his heart and hopes. What love letter could be finer or more appealing? Here clove pinks, ladies' delights, marigolds, sweet William and poppies were soon whispering his secret. The damask roses, flower-de-luce, and gilly flowers did but wait for the coming season to proclaim it. Surely these triumphs of floriculture won from the unfertile soil by a man who was bespoken for the iron tasks of politician and pioneer, were more eloquent than tri-

umphs of rhetoric. Rutland's garden, such was his ardour, soon became the most cheerful spot in all the plantation. Here, in early morning when the earth first awoke, when pretty maids went shyly afield to gather the may-dew from the grass to purify complexions already as pure as lilies, and every bush contributed its little runnel of bird-melody to the flood that overspread the wilderness, here he set the seal of his love. Here the evening found him when the crickets chirped and the dew was cold on the grass and the healthiest flower looked pale and ghostly.

One evening in the early May he set forth for the house of Captain Hollingsworth who had received from England a stock of flower seeds that he was fain to dispose of. Turning his back upon Shawmut he passed into a little lane that led to the school house and already worn bare by the first brood of Boston students. Poor little lads who were forced to learn so many of those old-

fashioned lessons of self-control and self-denial, and who were destined to find in after life that they had been learned none too thoroughly.

This lane led to the market place. On either side were green meadows now fast bespread by the soft May dusk, and beyond lay the town, its housetops still bright in the parting smile of the sun, while the bay held the colour of an amber sky. The scene was well worthy of attention, but though he felt its influence Rutland was too deeply wrapped in his dreams to observe the beauty of the outer world. In truth, having at last come out upon the main thoroughfare, so oblivious was he to his surroundings that the worthy governor accosting him, spoke twice before he gained attention.

"'Tis no marvel if a man doth lose himself in the maze of perplexities that beset us," said Winthrop in reply to Rutland's apologies. "Sorely troubled am I myself over the new matter that came up at the

court to-day, and hast thou leisure, Master Rutland, I would hold speech with thee concerning it."

As Rutland's errand did not permit of delay the governor walked with him to Hollingsworth's house. One of the few gentle touches that nature had lent to this harsh old man was a love of floriculture, and business being dispatched, Hollingsworth led his guests to an orchard of young trees which he had recently planted at the side of his dwelling, and where now for the first time on New England soil daffodils were blooming. The tender interest with which these grave men beheld the once familiar flower, spoke pathetically of the dreariness of their expatriation and of the love still lying deep in their hearts for their lost home. The tenderly arched eyes of Winthrop wore a deeper melancholy as he looked upon these vivid blossoms nodding on their long, succulent stems, and seeing in them no doubt the lush, moisture-sated,

richly-nourished verdure of England. Perchance, they expanded in his imagination into the paradise of an English garden with its odorous flower-beds, massed shrubs, and rose-bowered alleys, such as no doubt pertained to that Groton manor dear to his childhood and youth, but which could be his now only at the cost of all his manhood held highest.

To Rutland the daffodil spoke not of his past which had been one of renunciation, persecutions and pain, but of a future to be built upon a foundation of iron purpose and marble purity and as glowing as the rosy pavilion of love. While his companions discoursed of the affairs of the colony he gazed dreamily at the flowers as if he could not easily withdraw himself from their spell.

"There have been many surprising stories buzzed about among the people concerning this petition," said old Hollingsworth, "and I would gladly hear the opinion of our wor-

shipful Governor. Is it in good truth subversive to our government?"

"Ay, both to our church and state," answered the governor with troubled seriousness. "It points to so-called illegal commitments, unjust fines, and votes only in the hands of church members, so that (as it saith) good English subjects be not permitted to enjoy their rights and liberties here; and openly and malignantly charging us with slighting the authority of England. Therefore, seest thou, if the petition be carried to Parliament, according to their threat, what a desperate business it may prove for us."

"But I do misdoubt if England in the hot contention of this time be able to busy herself over the affairs of a far-away colony. Verily," continued Hollingsworth with his ready sneer, "the high hot contentious brains of these malcontents be sorely muddled, else would they have chosen a more favourable time for their conspiracy."

"Yet the home government hath a touchy jealousy," said the Governor, "and doth not see that in the making of our laws we come as near as we can to the laws of England, only changing when our circumstances doth compel us. Even those of our own party there do condemn us in much, little heeding that the perils we are in, force us to follow such courses as we do. How is it, Master Rutland, didst thou not hear condemnation of us in England from those even who are of our church way and do call themselves our friends?"

The Governor turned from the contemptuous face of Hollingsworth and met the calm glance of Rutland, who answered readily: "Many did speak to me in sorrow of what they called our persecuting spirit, and the practice of such courses as we did flee into the wilderness to escape. I do assure you that I have heard them pray heartily that the Lord would give us a meek spirit so that we would not strive so for uniformity,

compelling many to worship in a way against their consciences; and some pointed to great dangers run from so many left out of church fellowship and civil freedom."

"They perceive not the obligations that are laid upon us who do seek to 'stablish the foundation of God's kingdom on earth here in the desert, nor how the undertaking doth compel us to an exclusive policy. Verily, 'tis a far easier part to help this church-state with their prayers from afar (feeling that they may yet themselves be obliged to flee hither,) than to fight powerful enemies by subtlety, having no defense either of beak or claw."

"Concerning this matter of the exclusion of reprobates from our government which is so great matter of complaint, what other course is possible?"

"Softly, good Master Hollingsworth," interrupted Rutland. "The word reprobate hath not an extension, as I see, to cover the vast multitude of godly people who differ

from us in their church-way. Nor should we seek to confine the Church of Christ to a narrow compass,"

"Though the petition be not carried to England," interrupted the wary magistrate, "or even if it be carried there and yet not such great mischief done, yet 'tis a dangerous thing to have it circulated about our plantation, stirring up discontent, and leading many a hitherto peaceable, law-abiding citizen to question and pry into the authority of our government, and to 'stablish a grievance where no grievance was before. Indeed, copies of this petition have been thrust upon some good and honest men (though belike of no great learning) and questions put to them to the purpose of stirring their love of freedom, and pride of Englishmen. So forward hath one zealous knave been, so I have heard, that some who should have more wit have been taken by his subtleties."

While the Governor was yet speaking,

the sound of footsteps advancing to the music of voices somewhat merrier than the sober town approved, became audible. Hollingsworth and his two guests involuntarily paused, and looking between the budding bushes into the street, perceived a company of persons making its way toward the ordinary.

For this was the evening that Goodwife Garland had set as that on which Barbara should bring Dr. Child to the inn, and the company whose merriment broke so ungently upon the evening air was composed of the court beauty and a number of the young non-freemen that she had converted to the cause of the petitioners.

Her love of action and life, of feeling herself a force, the effect of which was to be shown in an important political change beneficial to those she cared for, and in harmony with the traditions of her own family, as Child had foreseen, elected her for this enterprise. With such an opulent

stream of blood in her veins, she could have no forebodings of trouble and defeat, and she played her part with such boldness and joyousness that she might well be called the heart of the party, supplying as she did courage and confidence to every member of it.

"Tut, boy," she would say to Jasper when in his petulant jealousy he protested against the artful use she made of her charms, "I but lend myself to it for your good, and if these fools do think I mean more by my civilities than to gain their favour for the petition, 'tis their mishap solely. Only pluck up a spirit for the work of forcing this tyrannical government to give equal freedom to all, and then shall you take that high place nature hath fitted you for. Marry, but 'twould frisk my spirits amazingly to see the downfall of the saints."

Then would Jasper, who loved to brood and hated action, who cared only to live in

the enjoyment of the emotions and whose thoughts had never a practical aim, then would he answer her:

"Sweet mistress, some there be who soar to their high aims as a bird to a tree-top, yet most do fall and bruise themselves in the attempt. Were it not better to choose some easily-reached perch, and comfortably twitter away in the fair sunshine that haply doth rest as kindly upon the low bush as the high tree?"

The three Puritans who from Hollingsworth's orchard looked upon these roisterers were moved by far different emotions. Contempt was the only feeling with which Hollingsworth ever regarded those of his fellow-beings whose purposes differed from his own, above all when he believed those purposes doomed to defeat. The Governor looked with apprehension and anger at the would-be destroyers of the Christian Commonwealth, recalling no doubt that haughty carriage of Dr. Child at the court, which

he thought worthy of mention in his account of the conspiracy. As for Richard Rutland he was of those who thought a settled code of laws desirable for the colony and disapproved of the restriction of the suffrage; yet the threat of appealing to England against New England filled him with no less horror than it inspired in his companions. The company Barbara was in pleased him but ill, and it may be that he was as apprehensive for her safety as for that of the commonwealth.

The Governor was the first to speak.

"'Tis some of the doctor's rabble," he said gravely. "The maid is the young kinswoman of Samuel Maverick who came over to us in *The Griffin*. I pray thee, Master Hollingsworth, is not the young man who walks on her right side, Jasper Annesley?"

"Ay 'tis he sure enow, now as ever upon the devil's business," replied Hollingsworth. "'Tis but a short time since he did seek admittance to the church, which did

refuse him fellowship he being unable to give good satisfaction of his fitness for it. Verily, the church hath not erred in the matter, as in all likelihood he wished the church's mantle only to hide his own wickedness."

"The young maid hath a witching face and no doubt doth mightily bedazzle those poor foolish moths, to their own undoing," said Winthrop. "Twice or thrice within this week have I seen her in the town, and ever with the same foolish buzzing and humming about her as now. A gaudy figure she makes in our sober town with apparel fitter for a Maid Marian in a morris dance than for an honest English gentlewoman."

"Ay, and still fitter for the scarlet woman," snarled Hollingsworth. "For see now the effect it hath to egg on our young men to broider themselves with foole fangles, and things which nature hath no need of. See how the foolish knaves have

applied what little wit they have to the procurement of costlie stuffs, as if, even in this roaring desert was to be heard again the old shop-cry we used to hear in England. 'What d'ye lack, gentles? What will you buy? silks, satins or stuff taffetas!' and 'twas but to choose and take. And all this bedecking of the body while the soul goes mother-naked!"

"These, mayhap, be some of the thousands they speak of as sighing and weeping for church privileges," said the Governor with stern sarcasm. "They have gone now to the ordinary for consolation under such grievances as they do suffer, and perchance to plot more mischief."

"The landlord of the ordinary is an honest man, as we know," said Hollingsworth, "but to make sure of the matter, and as I have not yet spoken with him whether there be any letters come to me by the last ship, yea or no, I will go thither and see his daughter, Goodwife Garland, who being a

sober and godly woman will willingly give us the news she gathers of these malcontents."

Upon this proposal, the three men went out together upon the street. Hollingsworth and Rutland betaking themselves to the tavern, while the Governor walked thoughtfully homeward.

"Verily," he said to himself, "though there be complaints made by some that Master Hollingsworth hath a sharp eye to profit and is exortionate to the poor, which if true is a grievous fault, yet, I doubt not he is greatly irritating to Satan by reason of the many services he hath rendered to this commonwealth."

CHAPTER XII

THE two men who stood under the sign of the Whistling Swan were of all others of that town the two with whom the thoughts of Prudence Garland were most engaged, for she believed that each of them wished to make her his wife.

As Hollingsworth had already urged his suit upon her in plain—very plain—English, there was no question about his intentions, and Rutland's were inferred from the following letter, to which her interpretations are added.

"Dear and esteemed Madam: (*'Dear!'* what does that mean but beloved? and with both love and esteem what lacks in a man's heart for the woman he would make his wife?)

"The occasion of this script is a small matter of business that doth lie between us (How cosily now doth he put it) a matter of

business concerning the sale of a cargo of fish to one Thomas Rudd of the island of Jamaica, according to the instructions received from your late husband of happy memory. (H'm! he doth have no great eulogy to pronounce upon so godly a man as Jonathan Garland, yet perchance, 'twere not in human nature for a man to jade his wit to find compliments for a rival though he be ever so dead.) The consideration received in payment, esteemed Madam (Oho! The reference to my late consort hath cast a damp upon his spirits and he hath left out the 'dear' in a pet) was duly remitted, but the receipt for the same hath not been forwarded. Wilt thou therefore sign and seal the enclosed acknowledgment and return by next ship.

"Ever yours,
"RICHARD RUTLAND."

"*Ever yours!* By what words can a man, be he ever so eager, express more than by these two? Well-a-day, good Master Rutland doth lose no time, I having been a widow but a fortnight."

Rutland had not followed the letter by any such overture as Prudence expected, but it was not until that voyage in *The Griffin,* that any doubt as to his love for her darkened her sky. The little cloud first perceived with incredulity and anger, grew blacker and heavier, but it did not overspread all the heaven of her hope. Her vanity made a rift here and there; besides she thought a marriage between Rutland and the court beauty improbable. That gay Jezebel would as soon think of the angel Gabriel for a consort as good Master Rutland, and he, when Barbara should be revealed to him in all her native levity and true worldliness (this she deemed her too sharp to have betrayed to him), his heart would return to her whom the Lord had undoubtedly sent him for a helpmate. That he should behold Barbara stripped of all disguises was now the object for which she contrived by night and day. Prudence might seem no formidable enemy, but a

needle wit is better suited to certain varieties of feminine work than a more imposing weapon, and many a sly prick already had Barbara's reputation suffered from it. The goodwife received Rutland and Hollingsworth in a quiet room in the rear of the inn. By a vine-covered doorway this room gave exit to a small and pleasant yard where travellers sometimes gossiped over their ale or flip. The enclosure was, at present, occupied by the company that had just passed so gayly through the town and whose voices were now distinctly audible. A pale half-moon shining above the aspens that made a feathery hedge at the end of this yard clearly disclosed the revellers, as seated upon the benches they clanked their beer-mugs, between what no doubt passed for sallies of wit.

"The manner of these persons doth grieve me exceedingly," said Prudence, "for I know that it is such as is not to be suffered under a Christian government.

Wilt thou but listen a moment, thou can'st readily convince thyself that I speak but the exact truth."

"Such an act standeth not with our honour," said Rutland soberly; but Hollingsworth interposed with a warning pressure upon his arm.

"Nay, dost think God's servants do well to choose what their service shall be? Our duty compels us rather to work in the way appointed us, though we make but a mean figure in the profane eye."

"Nor was the word 'listen' which I made use of the proper term," said Prudence. "Be one within ear-reach he must hear their high-handed jesting whether he will or no. At least, gentlemen, I pray you to tarry here while I fetch the letters that have been left in my keeping."

As the door closed upon her, the chatter in the inn yard suddenly subsided, and the doctor's voice, that was in truth of a quality to give pleasure to ears even as dull to the

enchantment of music as those of the Puritans, trolled out an English song:

> At her fair hands, how have I grace entreated
> With prayers oft repeated,
> Yet still my love is thwarted!
> Heart, let her go, for she'll not be converted,
> Say, shall she go?
> Oh, no, no, no, no, no.
> She is most fair, though she be marble hearted.

it ran, and though assuredly it was far from such vocal performances as were most approved by the listeners in the room of the inn they could find nothing actionable in it. At all events, Rutland was satisfied that no such high handed behaviour as the widow had spoken of was in progress and he seated himself, little thinking he was a party to a plot.

At the conclusion of the song the voice of the court beauty in praise of it also floated into the inn window.

"If music will not convert a heart to

love," were her words "then there be no power to move it. Oft have I marvelled why the devil were not equipped with a sweet and musical voice for the luring of men to destruction, rather than the poor enticements of horns, hoofs and a tail. Doctor, thou hast my thanks for the song. Come now, Master Annesley, give us the pretty rhyme, ye writ and styled, 'The Lady of Delight.'"

"They were meant only for your own ears Mistress," he whispered, while he who sat upon her other side caught up her words:

"The Lady of Delight. By the faith of my body we all know without the aid of the muses who is the Lady of Delight. Here's to you fair Mistress."

And his voice was drowned in the clanking of the pewter mugs.

"A plain-spoken man hath a poor chance in this company" cried a third, a burly man whose voice proceeding from a most capa-

cious chest was easily heard in the inn-chamber. "Yet, though my speech be not broidered with poetical conceits, which I leave to scholars, masters of arts and students of the ancient classics, I would serve you with my sword to the very mouth of hell, Mistress Ryche, and were it ten times hotter than Master Cotton doth proclaim it."

"I know not what service ye could do her at the mouth of hell," exclaimed the first. "Ah lady, he would have ye know that he is a very constant lover, and so he is being constantly in love. He hath a big heart, but 'tis rarely at home, as one may say, nor does he know where to find it, though every comely woman in the plantation could help him, if it pleased her."

"Give us the lines, Master Annesley," said the Doctor "and I will set them to music in the Lady's honour."

"Ay, Master Annesley, repeat the lines.

I'll warrant they will set to music excellently well."

The court beauty in her white robe, with the pale moonlight sifting through the feathery aspens upon her, was of marvellous loveliness that night as many of those who saw her remembered. Not one of those who made up her court would find it easy to refuse her request, least of all Jasper Annesley.

"Madam," he said at last, "with your permission I will recite lines better suited to the humour of this company," and at her assent composed off-hand a satire upon the Boston church and Puritan government so seasoned with his bright and wild humour that those gathered in the inn-court broke into uproarious laughter.

"The young man doth seem to strive to put the halter upon his own neck," said Rutland hastily rising from the bench by the door where he sat, and turning to old

Samuel Hollingsworth, "Wilt come, or stay to spy upon him?"

"Your conversation doth commonly afford me excellent entertainment, worthy sir, but now I beg thee to be quiet," the old man answered, thrusting out his under lip, and lifting his hand to enjoin silence, for encouraged by applause Jasper had burst out into livelier wit and heresy. Hollingsworth's determination being plainly written upon his face, Master Rutland urged him no further, but passing out of the vine-covered door suddenly appeared before the revellers, his serene face, as he walked toward them, full lighted by the moon.

Long did the scene linger in Barbara's memory:—the little moon-flooded yard of the inn with its budding aspens, and the rude benches beneath them strewn with the empty tankards; the startled adherents of Child, in gaudy apparel with hands on swordless hips, and puffed-out stomachs, in one confused wavering group; and lastly,

the large dark-clad figure of Rutland, its quiet kingliness enhanced by the moonlight over it, and its shadow lying dark and still upon the grass.

"Jasper Annesley," he said gravely yet with kindliness in his tone. "Such words do shame your birth and breeding. Thou wilt presently, I doubt not, of thine own good sense see the sinfulness of them and rejoice that I did interrupt the course of so much folly. And canst thou not find better friends in the town than such as do encourage a course whereby ye may come under the censure of the civil authorities?"

"I dare be bold to say," struck in Child, "that when he comes to consider of it, Master Annesley will see that though we have not been quick to foresee this danger, for him, not thinking of any so low as to spy upon us, yet the course we do encourage him in, is urged in good friendship having for its end the liberty of all free-born Englishmen."

"And now," Rutland went on, paying little heed to Dr. Child, but casting his glance upon the young non-freemen perhaps wavering a moment to include the motionless, white-robed figure under the silvery aspens, "I would serve you all with good counsel when I say. Go presently to your lodgings and think if the cause thou art following be prescribed by your own heart and wit, or at the instance of another."

Though his tone was gentle, there was a flame and dignity in his eyes that checked a high and flippant answer. Nature sometimes stamps a higher warrant of authority upon a man, than can be given by king's badges or imposing insignia of office. This high stamp was set upon many of the early Puritans, springing from their invincible moral genius, no doubt, and was one means by which they imposed their iron rule upon the people. These young men, awed by the majesty of Rutland's face and manner, one by one found a pretext to escape until none

remained in the inn-yard but Mistress Ryche and Dr. Child.

Thinking that he had put an effectual stop to the proceedings, Rutland was about to return to the room of the inn, when Child detained him. "I would have a word with you, sir," he cried, stepping forward, his black eyes glittering fiercely, and his face, always pale, made yet more so by his passion and the light of the moon.

"Nay, not at the present time," answered the other. "The ordinary is too public a place for such speech as the accent of your voice doth apprise me. I doubt if on second thought you have aught to say to me, but if so I will hear you at my own dwelling."

"Thou shalt listen to me here," said Child haughtily. Though he boasted much of his own subtlety the doctor's anger often burst the hoops of prudence. His passion on this occasion blinded him to the fact that the office Rutland had performed was in reality that of a friend.

At this moment, however, leaving the shadow of the aspens, Barbara came forward and laid her hand upon his arm. "Nay, my friend," she interposed, "let us not insist upon detaining Master Rutland since it standeth not with his good pleasure, though," and she lowered her voice farther, "I too, would fain speak my thanks for the service he hath done us."

Perceiving that he had been saved from an act of folly, Child turned away and for a moment Barbara's eyes were fixed upon Rutland with the first look of gratitude he had ever seen them wear.

CHAPTER XIII

THE petition to which Samuel Maverick finally decided to subscribe was received with all the bitterness he anticipated. The Elders denounced it in terms that the petitioners declared "could not arise from a Gospel Spirit." The court stigmatised it as seditious and subversive of good order, for it threatened to appeal from their sentence as not the ultimate one regarding the affairs of the commonwealth; and the anger of the people was vented in jibes and sneers as exasperating as their ingenuity could invent.

The family of Maverick, therefore, kept close to their own island. Upon the first Sabbath after the petition had been presented, there was a storm of sufficient violence to serve as an excuse for an absence from church; but a second absence would bring the tithing man to Noddle's Island and a fine would be demanded in penalty,

while a lodgment in a wooden cage might be the end of persistent non-attendance. When therefore, the second Sunday came, Maverick's household made ready to go to the town.

The rigid domestic discipline of the Puritans was not maintained in the family of Maverick. The children played gayly on their way to the ferry, no doubt avenging themselves in advance for the dismal hours they must pass watching the hour-glass; while unmindful of their agony, the preacher thundered on from the high heaven of his pulpit. Barbara sang ballads or the party-songs of the Royalists, or perhaps jested with her uncle, while good Dame Amias beamed upon them all, feeling no more necessity for a Sabbath-day face than the bluets that smiled up out of the grass.

"The dear little ones!" she said to her husband following her brood with fond maternal eyes. "The day will now soon come,

I hope, when they shall receive Christian baptism. I have ne'er dwelt on the matter, but truly 'tis a grievous thing to a mother who has brought innocent sweet creatures like these into the world to rear them like Pagans, and much have I grieved in secret over it."

"Why, now, was ever a woman's tongue so checked and chastened!" exclaimed Maverick, his handsome eyes twinkling, for it had been the good dame's habit upon a Sabbath day always to bewail this Christian privilege. In her simple way she was religious, placing much reliance upon the ordinances of the church, and, being a fond mother, grievously deplored the rite whereby, could she not keep her children with her on earth, they would at least speed safe to heaven.

"I trust the petition will be answered with no length of waiting, and we be either taken into the church here, or what would please me far better, be permitted to

'stablish a church according to our own way. To think, dear heart, of the long years that we have not once partaken of the sacrament," she continued in her comfortable and placid chirp, "but have borne uncomforted, the intolerable burden of our sins."

"You bear no burden of sins, Aunt," said Barbara who could not forbear to laugh at the discrepancy between the comfortable tone and dismal words. "Your heart is like a fair sheet of paper with solely a few love-words writ on it. Marry, mine is more like a wicked book such as is burned for its heresy (and no 'intolerable burden' to me either). As for my uncle's heart—"

"Tut, girl," he interrupted "what should ye know of a man's heart, save that small part which he doth choose to show to women—and no true sample either? I'll tell thee, Mistress Barbara, a man's heart is a thing a happy maid cannot conceive."

"I know, Uncle, that you are grievously

troubled as to the petition," said Barbara, now becoming grave. "Yet Mr. Vassal did tell me but yesterday that for his part he did have no fear of the end and outcome of it, for, said he, the exclusive policy of the church here, doth make a large majority of the people non-freemen; and 'tis the native property of Englishmen to be tenacious and tender of their liberties."

"But the magistrates have all in their own hands and there is no redress of grievances to be had," Maverick responded, "complaints being answered with fines or stripes, and any move for the extension of liberties made a capital crime, so that our very lives are in jeopardy, none being able to prophesy what will be the end. As for laying our petition before Parliament, as we have threatened, 'tis not in my humour and I pray heartily my necessities will not drive me to it."

They were now almost across the bay and the nearness of the town checked their vol-

ubility. Figures could be seen moving in the streets there, but the Sabbath-day stillness was broken only by the sounds of nature—the whistling of the wind, the lapping of the waves, and the cries and songs of innumerable birds, to whom the strict Puritan Sabbath, when instead of handling guns their enemies must fold their hands in prayer, brought one day's peace, out of the seven.

In no other way was that fair expanse of water the English emigrants found between the horns of Nahant and Nantasket more unlike the present bay, than in the teeming bird-life on sea and along the shore. Great flocks flew over the heavens in streams like a milky-way of birds. From reedy coves swarms of beautiful wild fowl of irridescent plumage and wild note, rose and flew inward. While over the sea pealed the note of the laughing gull and the cry of the auk, a great penguin-like bird that the colonists drove northward to Labrador, the

beginning of the long list of innocent victims that have fallen before the hunting and tree-felling fury of the pioneer and the fierce blizzards that follow the destruction of the forests.

The combination of a Puritan Sabbath and a keen east wind may well have been depressing, and in truth, the family of Maverick who now reached the town found it so.

"Mother," said the youngest child pressing close to Mistress Maverick when half the distance to the church had been covered, "Mother, the people do not look pleasantly at us."

"They know not how to look pleasant," answered Barbara disdainfully. She stepped forward joining her uncle, meaning thus to form an advance-guard to shield timid Dame Amias and her children from these sharp glances. Not that the people contented themselves with glances only, their tongues being ever ready to express their disapproval.

"Who would have mistrusted the subtlety there is in this man?" said a burly Puritan with a beetle brow made for frowning, and who now cast a dark glance at Samuel Maverick. "For all he hath had a free hand with us, his heart hath been with our enemies. Though he hath been left in peaceable possession of the corner here he had chosen, and hath greatly enriched himself, yet he doth take the first opportunity, as he conceives, to destroy us. I have heard it whispered ere now that our worshipful Governor doth unworthily in bestowing his affection upon one notoriously indifferent to our reformed church."

"Verily, the man hath a loving and courteous manner that doth incline the sinful human heart toward him," said another, shaking his hoary head within the circuit of his stiff ruff, and sighing dismally. "Nevertheless, he is surely a true son of Baal, for he hath broken his freeman's oath and hath plotted treason against the commonwealth."

The little family party next drew near two dames standing in a door-yard, bowing their heads over each others' shoulders like two neighbourly old horses.

"These petitioners do creep and wind themselves into the good opinion of the multitude till they be ready to think they be filled with true piety and make this disturbance solely from a desire to serve God according to their consciences," said one. "But their acts show whose children they be, taking liberty to go abroad o'nights and running into other sinful miscarriages."

"Goodwife," said the second dame, "I have heard that Maverick's niece doth a world of mischief with those black eyes. She doth commonly toll a pack of gallants after her who cry 'Oh, good my lady, do but bestow a smile upon me else must I die of grief!' and that she can do as she pleases with them. The 'Lady of Delight' they style her. Well, well, we know what be the morals of court ladies."

"Softly, neighbour, or she will hear you," interrupted the first speaker, yet with a frown, but Barbara had already heard her. "A bold hussy, truly, her black eyes do outbrave us both," the dame added.

And so they did.

"'Tis a foul outrage, Barbara," said Maverick in a low and bitter voice, "yet I know not how to mend it."

"Nay, uncle," she responded turning to him a face that had a glow of triumph in it. "There is one thing a man never can learn; namely, that a fair skin doth oft cover a contentious temper. As to this adventure 'tis somewhat churlish, I confess. Yet I cannot say that I altogether mislike it. My spirits be more raised than quenched by it. Was ever such a cloud of black looks cast at a poor maid! Yet could they not lower my eyes by a hair's breadth were they ever so fierce."

Having reached the meeting-house, little

Edmund began to cry because he must sit away from his mother; nor would he be bribed into obedience but stood whimpering, until taken in charge by the tithingman who doubtless checked his sobs with the hare's foot. Nor was Edmund the only one of the family group who objected that day to the custom that dispersed them about the meeting-house. For now they had to pass an ordeal far more trying than any they had hitherto endured; not only were they to be the target of the people's dark and disapproving glances but of the maledictions of the preacher as well, the Puritan clergy never hesitating to use the opportunity of sermon-time for public scourging of offenders.

It was the custom for those living at a distance from the church, among whom was the family of Maverick, to refresh themselves between services at the ordinary, one appointed to that office being

present to maintain good order and guard the Sabbath from any profanation by conviviality and jesting.

Upon the ringing of the bell for the afternoon service, little Edmund whose morning had been made miserable by the vigilance of the tithing-man, who no doubt performed his duty as regarded Maverick's son with an extra good will, rebelled at a further attendance at church that day. The little lad was the ancestor of a numerous race, being perhaps the first spoilt child in America, and every inch of his plump little figure certified that he could only be haled to church by main force.

"The child is ailing. See you he can scarce hold up his head," cried Barbara, determined to avert a domestic conflict all too likely to end in the discomfiture of the whole family. "Here, sweeting, lean upon me rather than on the hard bench. Dost feel well, Edmund?"

"Nay, cousin."

"And what ails thee, dear child?" cried his mother, her brow drawn up till her blue eyes were as round as a bird's. "Where is the pain?"

"Every where, mother," answered the little lad, who knew well how to play his part, which was simple enough, for never was a mother more easily deceived than Dame Amias, nor was Maverick likely to confound the two conspirators with his suspicions.

Being left alone with him, Barbara took the boy on her knee, sitting near the great fire-place, but as soon as he was drowsy she laid him upon wrappings on a settle. The room was a large kitchen with an enormous chimney-place furnished with numerous iron pot-hooks and a crane. The room ran the length of the house from street to yard, a window at each end. In that dull day, the two pinched windows admitted so little light that the remnant of fire on the hearth made a great figure glowing in the

obscurity of the deep chimney-place. Now and again, fanned by some air current, it sprang into sudden flames which struck sharp lights on the pewter that stood on the dresser at the farther end of the room, where also was a large table on which the noon repast had been served. In one corner was a bar, but the bar-maid and customers alike, were forced to go to church to pray for their daily bread though far more concerned, no doubt, about their daily dram.

Save an old and ailing maid-servant, Barbara and Edmund were alone. There was no sound to break the Sabbath-day stillness except the murmur of Barbara's voice as she sang to the child, the snapping of the fire, and the creaking of the sign outside the door in the wind.

Edmund being at last asleep, Barbara went to the window that gave a view of the yard. It was pervaded with the atmosphere of the Puritan Sabbath, an atmosphere not of peacefulness so much as of a cheerless

solemnity. The aspens were shivering in the cold east wind, the sky was leaden grey, and the empty benches wore an air of rebuked convivality. Under this aspect, especially for one with any prick at the heart it could be suggestive only of depressing ideas.

CHAPTER XIV

HARDLY was Edmund asleep before another patient claimed Barbara's care. The old serving-woman who had been left in charge of the inn and who was apparently suffering from some physical ill, had excited Barbara's compassion and she had sent her to bed, herself assuming the office of house-guardian.

Old Goody Bird soured by much affliction and Puritanism was taken by surprise by this kindliness in one she looked upon as a publican and sinner, but she thought slightingly of mere natural goodness. She liked the kindness that comes hard, by grace of God after long wrestling. Besides, she thought the offer might have been made from a desire to be rid of her company. In her best humour she did not receive a favour with much grace or gratitude and now being doubly acrid by acute bodily pain she repaid Barbara's kindness with an

insulting remark as to her disinclination to remain in the company of scoffers and wantons.

When, therefore, her groans first became audible, Barbara paid no heed to them, in a short time, however, it became evident that something must be done for her relief. Finding her way to the old servant's bedside, and overcoming her reluctance, Barbara tried every remedy her experience could suggest; but the need of greater skill was so urgent that Master Rutland was finally summoned from the meeting according to the sufferer's desire.

Rutland's skill in the healing art was in great requisition in the plantation, especially by the poorer part of the people, for whose benefit it had been acquired; and many times before now had Goody Bird profited by it. Her malady, however, had passed his skill, and he could do no more than alleviate her suffering.

When at last he had done all he could

for her, it was too late to return to the meeting-house and Rutland went into the kitchen with Barbara. The dark day had grown old, and the fire which had been replenished for his use illuminated the room.

Let him in whose face there is any hint of meanness beware of the light of the fire. Those now exposed to its searching test were of noble types. It did but accentuate the sweetness and calm strength of the Puritan, while the beauty of Barbara was of that vivid and rich sort that is but the more splendid in the blazing effulgence of the fire.

The domestic scene in the cheerful room, with the glowing hearth, the child sleeping on the settle and pervaded by the gracious presence of the young woman, gave an almost painful distinctness to Rutland's long deferred hopes; and though he allowed himself to utter no word of his longing, every gesture spoke it.

"Can I do aught for the child?" he

asked perceiving that Barbara was troubled and thinking the boy's illness might be the cause.

"The child is well enough," she answered, then lifting her eyes with a sudden resolve —"I would gladly have a word with you, sir, for I am sorely troubled as to the outcome of the affair at the inn-yard, and I would know if any but yourself overheard what was said by Master Annesley."

She seated herself at one end of the settle whereon Edmund lay, and from the opposite side of the wide hearth, the magistrate watched with fascinated eyes the play of the firelight on her graceful head and fair face, now lost in the folds of her lustrous silks, now caught in the meshes of lace around her throat or the frills from which emerged her white arms, restless with the vehemence of her emotions.

"None heard him save only his uncle, Captain Hollingsworth, who was awaiting letters that had come for him in the last

ship. Why now," he added, Barbara having made a gesture of distress. "Surely 'tis better he than another—the young man's own kinsman."

"You are all wrong. You are all wrong," she burst out wringing her hands in her despair. "Captain Hollingsworth is as I do verily believe, his bitterest enemy. Can you say truly, that he did not by word, gesture, look or tone, show a forwardness to overhear what might be a disadvantage to Master Annesley? Nay, I know well ye cannot. As to those foolish lines, I prithee what handle would they furnish to one who would do him an injury? Hath Master Annesley made himself liable to be presented to the court? By my truth, though I have heard so, I can scarce credit it."

"Consider," said Rutland with a wistful look at the girl as she folded her hands upon her lap with a visible effort at composure. "Consider what is the true purpose and principle of those who hath torn

their deep affections from their native land to transplant them, all broken and wilted, into this uncordial wilderness."

"I know. I know. 'Twas to establish a church-state," she interposed having slight patience at this moment to listen to a defence of the Puritan government.

He rose, and stood looking down into the ruddy depths of the fire as if he could speak easier if that vision of loveliness were no longer before his eyes.

"'Twas their heart's desire to build Christ's kingdom here and to practise the pure ways of God," he said. "Nay, call not up instances to the contrary, for that were an easy thing to be done, nor proving more than that which doth need no farther proof—that the human heart is weak, and Satan crafty. The composure of which we speak was as full of heresies as the weed pod is full of seed. It did attack those who are most proficient in grace, and therefore are appointed to show the way to heaven

to those who be not illuminated by so much of the Spirit. Our laws are not made in cruelty, and little do ye know of the pain the prosecution of them doth cause them whose office it is to rule the people. Yet do they strive not to yield to the natural weakness of their hearts, knowing that 'tis far better that one should suffer a just punishment than that hundreds should perish in their sins. To tolerate atheism is but to suffer poison to be dropped into the pure springs where the people fill their pitchers and the very babes come innocently to drink."

He paused and turned to meet the eyes of the court beauty fixed intently upon him, for Barbara would fain have looked into his very heart, into the inmost man, hidden from human sight and only to be judged of by the sprouts called acts which are so contradictory and inexplicable. His face so grave, strong, and faithful did not lend itself willingly to her purpose; but was he

not a man, she asked herself, as well as a Puritan, and was not love older than Puritanism?

"There be scant hope for Master Annesley, then, if that bitter old man be minded to denounce him," she said at last. "The poor boy doth have no friend, as it seems but myself whose weakness ye well know and also how much power there be against me. Marry, I can do nothing, indeed, save with your good help." She lifted her eyes and he read a world of entreaty in their troubled depths.

"Long ago I gave thee my friendship, and more. If I can do aught to help thee, speak," he said, but his heart forebode him.

"Words be worth little. If indeed ye do love me, give me now a proof of it, for see in this matter which concerns Master Annesley there is, do you give me promise of silence, merely one witness of his folly while two are required by your court."

"A promise of silence!" he repeated.

"I mean, if ye be called to witness for Captain Hollingsworth ye will not ratify this charge against Master Annesley. 'Tis simple enough. Your promise, good sir, your promise I do beseech you." She rose and walked toward him with open palms, her eyes of lustrous softness in the firelight.

He took her hands gently and drew them down as the least churlish way to refuse their pleading.

"What! do good men mean so little by their words? What, will you deny me, sir, when I do stoop to do that which I have never done before—to beg a man to give me proof of his love. Nay, do not deny me, if indeed ye love me give me the promise."

"I cannot, and if I could, you would ever after misdoubt me as one false to his conscience and his covenant. But I know that ye do not realise what you have asked of me," he said gently. "Moreover, thou dost exaggerate the danger he runs. Capt. Hol-

lingsworth will not be in any eagerness to bring his nephew before the court, and is far likelier to deal with him in private for his miscarriage. Should so unlikely a thing come to pass, still there be better ways of helping the youth than by forswearing one's word. Nor wilt thou find, if it then be needful, that I lack ways and will to help thee."

"Small reason have I to put faith in words," cried the girl passionately, sending sparkles of splendour from her angry eyes. "Ye Puritans know neither love nor friendship, what ye call such being mere lip-love, fruitful of naught."

Turning from him with a bitterness that would not be concealed, Barbara wakened the child; for at that moment the sound of people astir in the streets became audible, and she wished to leave the inn the instant the opportunity came for doing so.

"Hear me out," he entreated, and seeing her unwillingness, laid his hands upon her

shoulders and so forced her to it. "Thou art vexed and all without reason, which in calm after-thought ye will see for yourself. Dost think that a love that hath not its roots in fidelity and honesty be an honour to a woman, or is to be trusted? Thy soul spoke not to mine in that request. Ye say our people know naught of love nor friendship; but 'tis only they, or such as in establishing such relations unite themselves by their virtues, placing their satisfaction in what be spiritual and pure in each other, that do ever love truly. That thou shalt yet know such love I do heartily pray."

He spoke almost as a father might speak to his child, so tenderly, with anxious love, but she looked coldly at him from beneath disdainfully lowered lids. Immediately the door was flung open and the entrance of the church-goers relieved her of the necessity of answering him.

CHAPTER XV

THE summer of 1646 was like some child that is never forced by rough circumstance into sudden maturity, but allowed to develop in the slow gentle way of nature so that not a grace is lost. The sun was of a benignant motherliness with no such barbaric heat as that with which in this latitude she sometimes consumes her own offspring. Plenteous soft-dropping showers refreshed the earth. The wilderness with its endless copses was a fantasia of green—the green of the leaf in its tender beginning, gold in the sunshine, silvered in the breeze, and with that shimmering iridescence in the recesses of sunlit verdure—misty blue, shot with gold and pink lights that is yet far from the true shadow-colour of the tree. In it were woven wild flowers like delicate gems; anemones, violets and columbines, sweet-brier and lilies in such rare and rich designs as only

nature weaves. Though lacking the especial scent of English flowers the air had a balsamic odour, the spiced sweetness of pines and cedars, of galeworts and pungent herbs no less agreeable to the sense. Insipidity at least was no part of the portion the immigrant received from nature's hand in the new country. Here and there, encroaching upon the wilderness, were the planters' fields of maize. These with the young orchards and vineyards were the answer America made to those desperate first-comers. They were her promises for a future when among her children would be gathered a vast company of destitute, unmothered people, the outcasts of rich, old Christian countries.

In such a peaceful setting we must place the Puritan community during the summer of 1646. The bitter anger so freely expressed by the Puritans and the long delay in bringing the case to a hearing, made those months an anxious and difficult time to the

party who had united in a struggle for greater privileges. By reason of his love, however, the hostility of his townspeople affected Jasper no more than a dumb show of puppets. He trod the upper-air indifferent to the race of men quarrelling and gesticulating on the earth below, Barbara and his own throbbing heart seeming to him to be the sole realities.

No evil consequences having followed the imprudence, he had been led to commit at the ordinary, he soon cast it out of his mind, or rather, it slipped away of its own accord. For he was like a river that takes its colour from its surroundings. Though now it reflects the cheerful verdure of field or forest, the peacefulness of a soft sky or the promise of a splendid dawn, presently it will wear the sombre hue of the storm, quiver with the lightning that rends the sky; or it may be, reflect the misery of a mad-house, a prison, or those more ugly forms with which man disfigures nature. No more in the

gloomier portions of its course can it recall the peaceful scenes it has passed, or anticipate those that lie beyond, than while flowing under kind summer skies it remembers the misery of the past or forebodes the misery of the future.

During these summer months Maverick's island was the paradise of the petitioners, where not only was respite to be had from jibes and sneers, but where many a revel took place, that, had Endicott got wind of, perchance would have stirred him as mightily as did the sinful may-pole of Merry-Mount. Into such sports Jasper entered with as easy a grace as if he had never known the buckram of Puritan discipline, yet he was happiest when he and Barbara were together on some curving daisy-tufted headland or bold cliff, their faces fanned by the crisp breath of the sea. Though not capable of that intense passive absorption in the delight of the senses that marked her companion, Barbara was not insensible to

these felicities. The sea whether dancing daintily under the summer sun or beaten into fury by an easterly gale cast a spell over her. The ruddy Saxon blood in her veins, her physical temperament that impelled her to vigorous effort, the pleasure of mastering difficulties all made her as happy in riding triumphantly over the waves, in climbing to the most inaccessible points on the surf-beaten islands as another woman might be in the soft repose of a boudoir. But the bay was more to her than a plaything, it was a monitor inspiring nobler sentiments than she had learned at court. The absolute truth and frankness of nature rebuked the insincerity of human affairs, and she renounced her coquetry, or thought so. Formerly Jasper had complained that she pulled him toward her with one arm and thrust him back with the other; now she was his good comrade and counsellor only, and her counsels took a new wisdom. If he ever recalled the need

of caution because of the power he had given Hollingsworth over him, it was at her instance.

"He hath forgotten the matter," he would then urge. "He hath swallowed his grudge against me."

"Perchance, but if so, 'tis as a cow swallows and I'll warrant 'tis yet in his farding-bag," she answered. "Promise me that ye will give no further cause for offence." Jasper promised, but though he was not false, his promise was not worth the breath he made it in. It was good only until some new emotion drove it from his memory, the state of consciousness of the promise-moment having no more persistence than the colour of a looking-glass, which one might as well ask to be faithful to cool blue, when cool blue is replaced by burning red.

One day Hollingsworth sent him to one of the harbour islands to oversee some men who were splitting staves for the Bermuda market. Annesley wore a huntsman's out-

fit, a fantastic and picturesque dress chosen from the resources of the new country. It was composed of a red cap, a hunting-shirt of blue home-spun, the skirt slashed into fringe, belted over buckskin breeches, and gaiters laced well up on the thigh. In it, his figure showed all its good young strength and suppleness, and he seemed as much a part of the sylvan scene as the deer, the most touching of all charms that Nature lends to the forest.

It was already autumn, and the forest-ways were choked with haze. Yellow leaves dropped silently, like showers of gold falling through the blue mist, though no gusts shook the tree. The white birches, delicate ladies in gleaming groups, looked their loveliest in this setting; while the oaks which all the summer-time in their green dress had borne so close a resemblance to each other, now could be known by their lovely livery of red, or brown, or tawny orange. The air had the scent of

ripened nuts, the flower had become a fruit, the summer's work was done. Added to the melancholy of the autumn was the sound of the felling of trees. Here and there were scars upon the beauty of the island where the woodchoppers had been at work. In these cleared places lay giant pines, chestnuts, hickories, and that tree of noblest descent which wears its coronal with such royal dignity, the oak. Stooping beside one of these Jasper counted off its life upon the concentric layers that told the tree's great age. When he was born it wore no lesser majesty than it had worn that morning when it still adorned the forest. It had, no doubt, seen the rise of the wild tribe whose decay had made way for his own race. It was no stripling when Henry VII had issued his patent to John Cabot "to sail to the east, west, or north with five ships carrying the English flag, to seek and discover all the islands, countries, regions, or provinces of Pagans in whatever part of

the world," and which was the first step in the march of events that led to its downfall from an English axe. Annesley had little of the spirit of the civilisation-loving, tree-hating pioneer, and at last flinging down his axe in disgust, he went to his boat pulled upon the little rippling island-beach.

"What; are you going so soon?" called out one of the men, "I did understand from Captain Hollingsworth that ye were to spend the day with us. We be short of hands, as it is; and are we to have the wood ready when the pinnace sails, every man of us must do his utmost."

The young man answered with his eyes still fixed upon the island of Maverick close upon the mainland, as remote and unreal in the soft haze as a man's duty might seem to him in this languorous Indian summer weather.

"Once I did hear Master Cotton say, in a discourse in which he did set himself to prove the folly of mortal pride, that no man

need esteem himself a great importance in the world for, saith he, let his work be ever so seemingly serviceable, when he comes to die, lo, straightway another as well qualified as himself, takes his place so that he be not missed. Let the rogue who is to make my loss good show himself now, I say. Here is his work waiting for him."

Thereupon he jumped into his boat and soon reached Maverick's stronghold where he found a large number of the petitioners. Their faces wore an expression of strained eagerness, and suddenly he remembered it was the day their case was to come up in court.

CHAPTER XVI

IT was noonday before Annesley could persuade his mistress to relieve the tension of long waiting by a sail on the bay. Sailing southeasterly the boat at last reached the extreme tip of that tongue of land that stretches from the north coast out into the sea. Anchoring on the western side of the point Jasper and Barbara had but to climb the bluff to find the shade of a group of cedars—the ragged forerunners of a procession of majestic forest trees along the peninsula. The olive-green tone of the cedars stuck boldly against the dark blue of the ocean that lay to the north of the point, while southward stretched the tranquil bay, its more delicate silvery grey-green tones separated from the deep of the main by the swirling waters of the gut which separated this point of land from Deer Island.

"The sea this day hath a very cheerful

countenance," cried Jasper sinking down in the shade of the cedars, "I trow 'tis not so irritable as we found it when last we two came hither together. Dost remember, Mistress, how the surf did beat upon the rocks and come tumbling over the narrow bar?"

"Ay, and pretty though it be now in the sunlight, yet better do I like the sea when 'tis fretted into great passion and play of waves. That ye are of a different taste is a plain thing to be seen. Marry, ye have turned your back upon the mighty ocean to look at naught but the silly babe of a bay." The girl threw an amused glance over her shoulder at her companion who lay stretched in blissful content upon the warm sand, his dreamy eyes turned southward.

Yet to his full content there was one thing lacking for presently he looked entreatingly at her and said: "Come sit here beside me, for there is much of loveliness in this scene, all made so soft and delicate by the vaporous air. The islands seem un-

der enchantment, and those pearly hills yonder, why, can ye not more easily believe them the gateway of some paradise than the domain of savages? The day is like a foretaste of heaven."

"And are you, indeed, in such a happy frame?" Barbara broke out in sudden impatience. "How *can* you be so unmindful of all that is at stake to-day! nor have one thought for those who be bearing the brunt at court, alack! were I a man——"

"And what a mettlesome young rogue you would be" he said taking the word where with a shrug she left it, "ready I trow for any perilous, romantic adventure —a nimble-witted gallant who yet says no more than his sword will make good, all chivalry and valour and sparkle and splendour. Yet by my faith I thank heaven you are, instead, the sweetest maid an unworthy wretch ever bent the knee to, and whether ye will or no, my own dearling lady."

His palm curled over the little slipper-

tip which had lain within an inch of his hand all this while, and he looked up at her with so bright a glance that she could but smile back at him, though she went on as seriously as before.

"Consider" she said "what this instant of time may mean to us. It may be that even now the magistrates are giving favourable answer to our petition (feeling themselves forced to it by the right we have on our side) or which is far likelier, denying us so that we shall be put to the necessity of appealing. And truly the latter would please me as well, for even were the petition granted I misdoubt whether there would not be plenty to chafe at. For the welfare of those I love here, therefore, I do hope to have a general governor at last and a body of law after England's pattern. Ay, *that* is my very heart's desire."

"And dost thou care so much?" he murmured, raising himself on his elbow to look at her.

"Do I care so much?" she echoed, casting him an angry and reproachful look. "Truly, I am not so made as to see a wrong and not wish it righted. Only this very day hath my uncle opened his heart to me, and I have seen how he hath borne all manner of cruel insults and injustices, outwardly unmoved as beseems a man of spirit, but sore and hot within. He is not of such base quality as to be so used, and may the day come speedily when the high offices here, be in the hands of the king's loyal subjects, and these miscreants brought down to sue humbly for the favour of those they have wickedly sought to crush."

"See the angry humour ye have worked into. Come, sweet Mistress, sit here quietly beside me, since there is nothing now to be done, nor look so unkindly on one who but sought to divert you for your own good."

"In sooth, I am too harried to tell friend from foe," cried the girl, being far too gen-

erous in her nature to listen with distrust when an apology was offered her. "Tell me," she said suddenly dropping down beside him, making the brightest dash of colour on the sand, with spreading skirts, and long blue tiffany scarf looped from her arm, the end thereof fluttering in the faint breeze that blew in from the sea. "Tell me," she said, her dark eyes full of a sort of fiery earnestness, "would ye not of a truth, like to see these arrogant people humbled—they who have used you so ill?"

"Nay, I think not, if we be left to go our own way in peace."

"But that wicked old man, who, as you once told me, did in your childhood inject a subtle poison into your heart which will embitter your whole life," she persisted.

"Did I, indeed, so speak," said the youth moving himself nearer so that he could press his cheek against the folds of her gown. "Well it was long ago. Verily, I

find no anger now against him in my heart."

"I pray you remember how he has ever stood between you and your heart's desires," said Barbara, urged by his indifference to make hate a whip to his ambition, "that because of his ill-will you are (so you say) as a heathen man and a publican. Consider your childhood, how sad it was."

"I do account it in some part my own fault," answered Annesley. "Ay, a sad childhood was mine! But how was it with thee, sweet little maid as thou wert? Oft have I pictured thee, with bright flashing eyes, a ringing voice, and a kind heart withal, I'll warrant, beating under thy little pearl-decked bodices. How was it with thee, Mistress? did they make ye wish you had ne'er been born?"

"Not so," replied Barbara, "but perchance I did make others wish I had ne'er been born. No grim childhood was mine,

Master Annesley. In place of terrifying sermons and lectures there were the chase, carnivals, masques, and no pains-of-hell to scare pleasure away. Once I did play before the queen in a masque enacted at Somerset House, and right gracious to me was Her Majesty, I do remember well. Ah, me, how sad be her state now, poor lady!"

She looked sadly over the wide blue expanse of ocean in the direction, perchance, in which she deemed fair France to lie, while her lover dreamed of a little maid all innocence and beauty flashing in jewel-sewn scarlet robes in the glitter of a palace-scene. He was suddenly aroused by an excited exclamation from his companion, and both sprang to their feet.

Chased from the forest upon the mainland, a deer came flying along the narrow bar that terminated in the point of land below the bluff whereon they stood. With every sinew strained and feet that seemed barely to touch the ground, the deer yet

managed to keep but a slight space between himself and the wolves that followed in a close-wedged pack. The bar was over a mile in length and the view unobstructed to those who stood on the bluff. It was a memorable scene, thrilling with the tragedy of nature. The narrow beach-strip with its curling edge of surf and the wide expanse of sapphire sea beyond, made the simplest background to the forms of the graceful deer, its antlered head rising nobly from the body, and the grisly, bush-tailed wolves, with blazing green eyes and lolling tongues, their long nozzles nearly level with the line of their backs.

Reaching the extreme point, the deer was about to leap into the whirling water of the gut, by which means alone he could escape his pursuers; when the crack of a fowling piece shivered the air, and the breathless spectators saw him spring upward, and then fall limp upon the beach.

While their attention had been thus oc-

cupied, a boat had anchored on the other side of the bluff behind them, and a man having come ashore, now strode along the beach to the point where the deer lay. The figures of the young man and woman as they stood clearly outlined against the sky were only too conspicuous, for as he turned his face towards them, they perceived that he was Solomon Hollingsworth.

"Here comes one ravening wolf more in place of those that he did scare away," whispered Annesley. "He is angered, no doubt, that I have left my work, and is ready to pour his wrath upon me. Shall we hasten to the boat and so make our escape more happily than the poor deer hath done? Verily, Mistress, though I care not for my own part I would fain save you from the gall of his tongue."

"No, no," she answered earnestly, "'twere folly to so increase his anger against you. I pray you, Jasper, remember that he hath a power over you, and do what

you can to pacify him. Methinks he wears a vengeful look. Beware!"

That he was in no genial mood a glance at his face too surely proved. The full sunshine does not lend beauty to the physiognomy, but the effect on the face of Hollingsworth was hideous. Instead of changing the meaning of it, as is commonly the case, it did but intensify its natural expression. The scowl became darker, the line of the nostril still more scornfully raised, which movement lifted the upper lip revealing a set of wolfish teeth.

Jasper and Barbara went slowly down to the beach, slowly because with a presentiment of trouble. Had Hollingsworth's frown really be-dimmed the day? they asked themselves. Could it be that the sun still sparkled upon the crystal sea as it had done while it held out the hope of deliverance to the hunted deer mingling with the sharpness of death?

When having descended the cliff, the

young pair stood before him, Hollingsworth turned sharply upon his nephew. "Eye servant," he snarled, "why are ye idling here? You have shamefully and wickedly betrayed the trust I put in you, whereby not only is your own time and labour lost, but their leader being gone the other knaves have all done likewise and have wasted the day in sports, so that there is no longer a hope that the staves be ready when the pinnace sails: Answer, knave, why are ye here?"

"The day was fine and the temptation great to go upon the water," Jasper was forced to answer.

"I myself, was the occasion of his truancy," broke in Barbara, "and any loss ye suffer should be laid at my charge."

"Dost think it mends his case to have it said he neglected his duty for the favour of a light o' love beauty?" Hollingsworth cried with contemptuous fierceness, turning his sharp eyes upon Barbara. "This

matter doth lie between Jasper Annesley and myself, nor canst thou undo the ruin thou hast brought upon him."

Perceiving that her presence inflamed his anger, Barbara walked away, but his loud threatening tone followed her, and she waited in vain for a sign that his passion had cooled. At last having taken what satisfaction he could with his tongue, he went to his boat and sailed away.

Heedless of Barbara's warning, Jasper had first reproached Hollingsworth for the slight he had put upon her, but it is needless to say, there was little satisfaction gained by it. A torrent of angry abuse was poured out upon him with all the scornful violence that Solomon Hollingsworth had at his command, and when at last he left him, it was with no doubt as to the mode of his punishment.

"He will be satisfied with naught but my ruin," the young man said as he rejoined his companion. "He is resolved

upon charging me before the court with heresy."

"Pah! the wolf! we shall outwit him yet," she cried, but the resolution in her eyes met none in his.

"'Tis my own sin and not his vengeance that confronts me. Deep down in my heart I had a horror of myself that night at the ordinary when I did so brazenly traduce our ministers. I know not how I did so fall into sin."

"Ye did it to win my favour by a play of wit, and therefore the sin, if sin it was, is mine. I pray you let us consider together what can be tried for a remedy."

"There is no remedy—none. How should there be?" he said, shaking his head with eyes upon the ground. "Mine enemy is the Lord of Hosts."

"By my troth, I have little patience with you!" she cried, but presently seeing him so moved, her mood changed. "Do not, I pray you, talk like those shorn hypocrites.

Ye be no enemy of God, nor none else save your own foolish self. Nor do I believe God to be as you picture Him, for, as I have heard He is ever ready to forgive His enemies. Marry, He is well practised by this time in so doing. And now, I prithee, pluck up a spirit and consider what is best to be done."

They paced the beach seeking some device by which Hollingsworth's purpose might be defeated. They sat at the foot of the bluff, with their eyes on the careless sea, and thought and thought, all to no purpose. Across the glassy bay, rose the Blue Hills which had seemed to Jasper like the gateway to paradise. It was the same day, that had seemed to him like a foretaste of heaven but now though the beauty was the same he saw it and saw it not. All the brightness had gone out of his face, and Barbara saw there a strange wild look such as she had never seen in it before though it had been there on the night when Fate had flung

them together on the wide lonely plain of the moonlit sea.

At last they rose and went to the point where the boat was moored, for whatever plan they might hit upon, the first step should be Jasper's return to his neglected work with a force of men sufficient to make up for the time lost. This reparation and a promise of amendment with conciliatory behaviour on his part might serve to turn old Captain Hollingsworth from his grim purpose, and meantime some practicable means be thought of to thwart him if he persevered in the course he had threatened.

The breeze that on their way hither had sent their boat rippling through the water had died out, and before they had passed the Governor's island they were becalmed and forced to depend upon their oars. A circumstance from which Annesley argued very ill.

"Ye see," he cried as eagerly as in another mood he would have seized upon some

propitious aspect of the situation, "ye see for yourself, how the very elements will fight against me."

The court beauty looked at him with some curiosity as if she marvelled at the strange power a mere phrase had over him. But immediately her eyes fell and she murmured:

"Alack, that I who did but seek your good should be the means of bringing you to this trouble."

"Blame yourself in nothing. Come what may, you have been that in my life, Barbara, that hath made it worth the living," he said leaning forward in his earnestness, letting the boat drift; and in his sore trouble she had no heart to chide him for the free use he made of her name. "Sometimes I do mistrust that you were sent to me to make my loneliness more intolerable, when ye be with me no more, for you are bound to me by no tie save friendship, which is the fragilest thread that ever was

spun. If for my asking, some new bond combining the passionate love of a lover, the fidelity of a wife, and the wondrous tenderness of a mother could bind you to me, it would no more than satisfy the longing of my heart. Methinks the Lord who sees my unworthiness doth disincline your heart toward me, knowing if ye did bestow it upon me I would be as one transformed, caring no more what life brings, nor fearing God nor man."

"Love indeed hath a wonderful power," mused the girl with her deep and thoughtful eyes fixed upon him.

"Are you so sure, Jasper Annesley, that I am the one woman that you will love all your life long?"

"Oft have I told thee how I love thee—more than my own soul—and so I do," he answered her.

She turned her eyes from his passionate young face, and for a moment sat very still gazing over the weltering sea that had

brought her to this land. And had she crossed it for this, for this? How plainly she remembered the incoming of the ship and the man beside her and the prophecies he had made. Well, she had been wise in scorning them, but how strong and firm was that man—a strong tower on which some day some sober Puritan girl with no vanity, or love of pleasure, or pride, or delight in the power of her beauty and wit, in short with no human nature in her at all might comfortably lean.

"More than my own soul," he repeated, "but Barbara you mock at me."

"That would ill become me who have been the means of drawing you into such a coil," she answered gently, but still her eyes were upon the sea and in her heart she cried, "Would that I had never come."

"If you mean not to mock at me, what then?" he cried out and his voice had that in it which compelled an answer. "Do you mean that you could ever love me?"

At that instant a breeze blew up, and he obeyed her eager motion to loose the sail; and as the boat paid off and began fairly to ripple through the water he cried again, "Do ye mean that you love me? Barbara, play me no trick, for God's sake."

He stood straight and bold with glowing face, a transformed man, indeed.

The court beauty caught her breath with a gasp, but immediately looked up at him, smiling:

"I mean that I will be bound to you by the closest tie between man and woman. Love shall make you strong and we two together shall defeat these enemies of thine. Ye shall then take such a place in the world as nature hath fitted you for."

The young man dropped down in the boat beside her. Taking her hands in his and burying his face upon them, he murmured:

"Sweetheart, ye know I am all unworthy of you."

In truth this sudden answer to a prayer so often made in vain might well overwhelm a man, and so oblivious was Jasper to all beside the wonder and solemnity and burning joy within him, that had not his companion foreseen their danger, they would have struck upon one of the rocks in the harbour.

In an instant the boat was set right and Barbara took the tiller with the observation that unless she had a hand in the management of the boat they would not soon reach their destination.

"Our destination, our destination," he cried out. "Oh, Barbara, where may that be? Are we so bound to that gloomy town where my enemies lie in wait for me? The whole round world is ours to choose from, sweetheart. We are young and our lives lie before us. Can we do nothing better than to return to that place, to fight and plot?" He flung his hand out toward the Puritan town. Still standing, his figure was

painted in deep glowing colours upon the background of sea and sky, and his face, yet wearing its glory of crowned love, was burning with the intensity of his feeling.

"Look dearest at the sparkling sea," he went on, "does it not whisper better counsel? This boat shall carry us daintily over those little leaping waves until we reach Plymouth, and once there, we have our choice of all countries on the globe. And we shall be so happy, 'we two together' as you said so sweetly a while ago, only we shall be far away from our enemies instead of fighting them. Is that not a hundred fold better?"

She followed his glance to the southward, where beyond that point called Allerton, the coast stretched to Plymouth. But the sea which sings as many different songs as there are ears to listen, gave her quite other counsel. Though Jasper's words, spoken out of the fulness of his heart and therefore eloquent had carried away her imagina-

tion for a moment she was not deceived into trusting to his impulse.

Then Annesley dropped upon the seat in front of her, and leaning over caught that lovely face that was like flame in a dream and kissed it entreating:

"Give the word, dearest, give the word and we will sail away and leave trouble behind us. Thou shalt be well cared for I swear, only give the word."

But Barbara would not.

CHAPTER XVII

CAPTAIN HOLLINGSWORTH'S wooing was after all to end in a wedding. Its course had been like that of a lazy horse that lags wofully till the journey's end, when in its sudden haste, it upsets its rider at his own gate. At first, Hollingsworth's proposals had an amazing way of ending in the middle, and the overture being finally made the course of true love was hindered by the question of settlements. His mistress proved to be "foolishly doting of new pewter, and house plenishing," as her lover complained, nor was her heart to be weaned from worldly things, though the greater delights to be found in Jehovah were ever so eloquently set before her.

A vain woman whose offered love has been rejected, should be led blind-folded like a horse in the burning brush, till she be capable of self-direction, or in her shame,

rage and disappointment there is no telling what crazy course she may take.

In the belief that Master Rutland had come to a realising sense of his folly in regard to the court beauty, who had now fully proved herself to be one of Baal's children, Prudence had plainly proffered her own affections to him. Rutland had met her advances with the kindly straight-forwardness that was a part of his nature, thereby thoroughly demolishing all her dreams.

It was then, that after playing with Hollingsworth for months, she suddenly decided to marry him. Because of her smarting pride and desperate shame that hurried her out of herself, she made in her third marriage a disadvantageous bargain which she regretted for the rest of her life, her repentance beginning as soon as she had signed the marriage contract.

This happy ending of his wooing happened upon the day that Hollingsworth had quarrelled with his nephew, and restored

him to the highest point of good-humour that he had ever attained. Coming face to face with him as he was departing from the inn, Barbara was surprised at the unusual amiability of his grisly countenance.

Since the unfortunate evening at the ordinary, she had seen little of Prudence, naturally avoiding the people of the plantation that were known to be unfriendly to her party. As there had been no break in their friendship she had no hesitation in asking her to use Hollingsworth's affection for her as a means to persuade him to give up his purpose of presenting Jasper to the court, and when sitting down at her side Barbara began to banter her about this ardent elderly lover, she had no suspicion how odious she was making herself.

A little round red spot glowed on Prudence's cheek—an inflammation of hate and shame and jealousy. Her eyes ached to behold the beauty and youth of Barbara, when laying aside the long Puritan cloak in

which she had sought to hide herself from the curious glances of the towns-people, she shone forth like a star emerging from muffling clouds. Her dress was white with a low-cut over-bodice of murrey velvet offsetting the whiteness of her neck; round her throat were wound strings of pearls on which hung a curious ruby locket that Prudence had oft admired. It was of an antique style, and the ruby that rose and fell on Barbara's breast might have caught the trick of life from the heart-throb of a long line of fair passionate wearers, yet seemed a part of the girl's natural radiance, like her flashing smile or the sparkle of her eyes. Looking so critically at her, Prudence could but perceive that this radiance was under a cloud, and she divined with satisfaction that the "Lady of Delight" also had her cares and anxieties.

Trusting to the proffers of friendship Prudence had often made to her, and never guessing that the danger Jasper stood in,

was owing to her plotting, Barbara now revealed to her what these anxieties were.

"If Master Annesley be brought before the court upon any such charge as ye speak of, it will go hard with him, I trow," Prudence said, in answer. "Ye know well what double cause the authorities will have for censure, he being already in ill repute because of the part he hath taken in this petition." She dared not raise her eyes for she knew they were filled with exultation.

"I know that well, therefore have I come to you who have oft professed yourself my friend, and who would surely be loath to see his ruin.

"At your request Captain Hollingsworth will forego his revengeful purpose. Do me this service, Goodwife, and sometime perchance, you will be right glad of the grateful friendship of Barbara Ryche."

She unfastened the ruby from her throat

and with a sudden impulse, remembering Prudence's admiration for the jewel, held it toward her.

"Take it as a pledge of what I will then do for you," she said.

Prudence's hand twitched, as if she would willingly have met the soft palm on which the locket lay, but for her no jewel sparkled like revenge.

"Do not look to me to undo the consequences of your pride and conceit," she said coldly, waving the ruby aside, all the more resolutely as the realisation grew upon her of the impossibility of ever wearing it. "You have been the bane and ruin of Jasper Annesley, and I do greatly fear will prove the ruin of one far worthier than he. Dost know, Mistress, that in dissenting from the sentence of the court, Master Rutland hath offended many that were formerly his staunch friends? 'Tis whispered that he doth incline too much to the cause

of the petitioners, being seduced to it by Satan himself in the person of a certain sorceress here."

At these words Barbara felt a new compunction, but a moment's reflection showed her that here at least she had no cause for remorse, and she answered with proud composure:

"If by that pleasant term, ye mean myself I am wholly guiltless. 'Twould be a sorceress, indeed, who could turn Master Rutland from that course his conscience doth elect. As for Master Annesley, I do confess that my counsels have brought him to this pass. Your words are cold, yet a woman's heart should be pitiful, therefore I do beseech you to intercede with Captain Hollingsworth for the poor boy."

"If he be called of God to proceed against his nephew, dost think I would urge him contrariwise?" cried Prudence, turning her eyes suddenly upon the suppliant,

who looking at last into their depths saw with a start of wonder the hate and anger burning there.

"If revenge and hatred is what ye term being called of God——"

"This is strange language to use to me who art promised to be his wife," interrupted Prudence nor did she now strive to hide her malice. "And though your stomach hath been brought down to sue and beg for my help, yet I could do naught for you an' I would, so stiff is Captain Hollingsworth in his purpose to have his nephew brought to trial."

In the face of such hostility persistence was useless, and Barbara instantly left the inn. When she had come out again upon the street, the November dusk hung heavily over the town, and in her distress and hesitation she wandered ever further away from the water-side. The Puritan settlement looked its grimmest in that chilly

half-light. The frost had stripped every softening grace of vine or shrub from the stiff buildings, and every feature of the town seemed to express more strongly the stern character of its builders. Even the church, which since the Christian era has stood as a refuge for the erring, was here buttressed by those forbidding instruments of punishment, the stocks and the pillory, imparting an air of harsh authority to it, which hid its mission to solace and pardon.

In a community where a man's words and thoughts were every body's business, where a few words might be punished by banishment, and a slash in the sleeves be the occasion of a round fine, the censure of the court was no exceptional experience. Men of good estate and prominence, yes the greatest of them, were brought before that tribunal and grimly endured its sentence. A charge of atheism brought against a man or woman was no uncommon event, and

recantation and a fine, smoothed the path of the offender, but Annesley would be brought before judges already bitterly incensed against him. Moreover, he was of a far different mould from these stolid tough-fibred Puritans, having no such excess of virility to endure disaster, nor such power of reaction from emotional shocks.

Fully assured that Captain Hollingsworth would prefer his charge to the court against his nephew, (for she did not doubt Prudence's truthfulness) Barbara fell back upon a course hitherto dismissed from her mind as impossible, and which indeed, seemed to her as at once indelicate and ungenerous.

Leaving the market-place she walked hurriedly along the lane that led to that portion of the town on the side of the hill beyond the burying ground. The few dwellings were mostly lost in the gathering dusk, but from the windows of one of them, long

rays of light stretched forth into the darkness as of so many helping hands, at least such was Barbara's fancy, as fortifying herself by the memory of promises made to her by the master of this house she turned her steps towards it.

CHAPTER XVIII

PRUDENCE had said no more than the exact truth in regard to Rutland. His dissent from the sentence of the court upon the subscribers to Child's petition was taken in ill part, and he was suspected of sympathising with them further than he allowed it to appear, which was only in their demand for reformation of the franchise.

He had borne as best he might, which was with perfect sweetness and serenity, unmerited censure and mistrust, but as he sat by his lonely fireside his thoughts were not occupied with the political situation, nor of that in it which was most painful to himself. He was thinking of her who was his heart's desire, and who seemed drifting ever farther away from him.

Since that Sunday at the inn when he had refused the proof she asked for, of his love, he had not once spoken with her,

though he had seen her many times, chiefly at church where she went perforce twice every Sunday, and when despite his calm demeanour, he must have chafed at the bitterness of her position. The extreme haughtiness, the burning defiance that lovely face could wear was thereby stamped upon his mind. Occasionally, too, he had seen her in the street, in ill-chosen company and bubbling with merriment that he knew not ended when he passed. Once at the sunset hour as he stood on the wharf, out of the gilded grey of the east a boat with a rose-coloured sail came over the coppery sea. And in it sat Barbara bespread by the rosy flood with the warmest of smiles on her lip. Dazzled by this light and warmth and graciousness, when her boat reached the wharf, Rutland stepped forward to greet her. The court beauty curtseyed low and passed on with eyes that scorched and a titter behind him proved that her smile had been meant for another. Yet he was not discouraged.

He still trusted that revelation which he believed had been made by Him who holds the stars in His hands and orders the drifting of the clouds.

Perhaps to seek some further reassurance or to vivify his recollection of that revelation, he went out and stood under the evening sky, but no happy portent met his straining sight. Instead of that luminous expanse that had formerly seemed touched by the finger of God, was a dull pall, bearing no message. When he cast his eye downward, on that scroll on which his hopes had been written all was equally dark. The vines impaled on stakes and the wind-stripped bushes were writhing in the sharp November gale. The flowers were long faded and gone.

Yet even as he stood there the figure of a woman in a long Puritan cloak slowly took form in the dusk, a figure not made by trailing clouds upon the heavens, but of flesh and blood, the symmetry of which no gar-

ment could conceal, and which walked with perfect grace and elegance on the solid earth before him.

A figure so clad, was in truth no uncommon sight in the town and might be a neighbouring housewife bound upon some domestic errand to the old dame who served him; but he did not doubt that it was Barbara's self, and when therefore, coming forward slowly out of the dusk with the question,

"Is Master Rutland within?" she met a smile of warmest recognition. Without question or comment as to her sudden appearance he led her in from the blustering night and seated her by his blazing hearth. A deep awe mingled with his joy to behold her in that Puritan garment sitting there as if it were the fulfilment of a prophecy. Moreover, a new fine firmness was observable in her face and carriage which lent her dignity that went well with his hope. For some moments Barbara sat silent by the fire. She was cold, and faint from long fast-

ing having come to town without thought of food, and when pressed to it, accepted the refreshment Rutland offered. She was glad of the pretext to delay the explanation of her errand, which seemed more hateful every moment because of the look in Rutland's face—a look of patient hope, and tenderness that softened its rough-hewn lines, and shone gently upon her through the aerial grey of his eyes.

The room was bare, with only the blazing fire and the pine torches to lend it cheer. Its only furniture were two sea-chests, some chairs, and a table uncovered by cloth, at which before her entrance he had been sitting on a rude bench.

He was not a man who cared overmuch for creature comforts, she knew, but he bestirred himself to good purpose to make his guest comfortable. Having placed her in an armchair drawn up to meet the glow of the fire, and with his cloak rolled up for a footstool, he broiled a partridge upon the

coals, serving it with a wheaten loaf and a mether of mead. No cavalier bred at court could have attended her with a finer courtesy.

The orderly arrangement of the room with chairs backed to the wall seemed to hint that its hospitality had not of late been much taxed, and this loneliness and cheerlessness of his home could but remind her of Prudence's assertion that by favouring the petition he had estranged those he had counted as his friends.

The court beauty stirred in her chair and bit her lip.

"'Tis a cruel world, Master Rutland, but your good cheer hath near made me forget it," she sighed. Then as he turned to set down the empty mether she stared in the fire and said:

"I have come for that help ye once did promise me, and I in anger flouted."

Her voice always low, sank to an inaudible murmur, and raising her hands to her

throat as if her words choked her, she hastily unfastened and threw back her long cloak, thus breaking the happy spell her presence had wrought upon him.

In pained bewilderment he gazed at her a moment, then seeing the effort she made at self-command he went to the side of her chair and bent down to her with a grave, kind face. He took her hand, encouraging her to speak. The shyest child would have opened its heart to him, but the tenderness and self-unconsciousness of his manner only made Barbara's task the harder.

At last she lifted her eyes and a world of pain and trouble looked out from them under the drawn, dark brows, and suddenly she broke into hurried and passionate speech.

"'Tis as my heart did bode long ago—that evil old man doth purpose to have his nephew brought to trial. Sir, ye *know* what scant mercy will be shown him. From the day I first set foot in this plantation I

have brought nothing but trouble upon Jasper Annesley. First, though I cannot blame myself for that, I was the cause of his being refused admittance to the Church, thereby losing the rights of a freeman. It was I who did lead him into that imprudence—at the inn. Again, it was I who enticed him from his work upon the island, sharpening such grudge as his uncle had against him. As for the petition dost think he cares a doit for it? Oh, no more than the fallow-deer that, have they the privilege of the green forest, concern themselves not, as to who rules the town. It was I who made him sign it. I, who wished to see him take a high place in the colony, and cared not a whit that I made him do that which was against his conscience. But Oh, I will make amends, I will make amends. Others say that I do concern myself more than reason doth require in the matter, but you will give me better counsel, for you are a just man."

Her head drooped and a pink shame overspread her satin cheeks with a sense of the shamelessness of the request she meant to ask of him. "Master Rutland, ye are a magistrate and so have power to make the tie betwixt us that shall make his punishment mine, and give me the right to comfort and sustain him. Alack, ye know well that there be no other in the town to perform us this service else I would not ask it of you."

He went back slowly to his former seat, not looking at her nor answering.

The disclosure of the true purpose of her presence by his fireside, for a moment maddened him. A fierce passion tore through his heart as a scorching fire might sweep through some sweet, solemn, forest-temple. The attitude of the Saxon lover is to stand with red hands on the neck of his rival, and what was this that had been asked of him? He was a Puritan, but the Puritan did not make a fresh beginning in time. He also, was born with those instincts which made

primitive man grovel upon the earth and keeps these later generations from touching heaven. Yet, though the storm was violent, it was short. He drove back the beasts that beset him into that hidden jungle of one's nature, of which man makes no map, and Barbara little guessed the tumult in his soul.

"The remorse you feel is natural," he said at last, passing his hand over his eyes, "nor could I wish thee of a smaller nature to suffer less. Yet at the present time I cannot counsel thee to marry Jasper Annesley. His safety doth lie in betaking himself out of the jurisdiction ere Captain Hollingsworth doth bring his charge against him."

"'Tis my very thought," Barbara replied, "but such is the melancholy of his nature that he is all unfit to go by himself out into the howling desert to dwell with savages."

"And didst thou think to go forth to live among the wild men of the forest?" he said, half smiling at the incongruity of this daz-

zling, daintily-clad beauty of the court in such surroundings as the wilderness furnished. On second thought, however, he shrank at the evidence it gave of her love for Annesley. "Yet see what foolishness for a man of his mould to adventure upon such a rough course?"

"But what other be possible?" she asked. "Truly 'twere far more to his humour to dwell among civilised people in some far corner of the world, yet how should he go hence? The English ship, *The Supply* lies in the harbour, yet doth the magistrates keep so watchful an eye upon it, forcing the shipmaster to render account to them of all passengers, that he cannot secretly take passage upon it. A small shallop goeth three days later for Seville, but in three days' time I doubt not Jasper Annesley will be looked for by the marshal."

"Listen then, and I will show thee how he can escape all watchful eyes. Ye know that at the entrance of the harbour there stand-

eth an island-group that is cut by nature's cunning hand into many caves, where methinks a man might easily hide. There is a good natural landing-place for a small boat on the southern side of the outermost of these, and here let the young man be conveyed before the morning dawns."

"Ye know not his humour," Barbara interrupted. "Truly, in that lone and gloomy place he will be distraught in a week."

"He will be far hence in a week," Rutland went on calmly. "In two days' time my shallop goeth to the Bermudas; now, will I contrive to go in the shallop and see that Master Annesley be taken aboard, and I will then instruct him as to what course he may follow there, giving him the names of some who may be of use to him, and so, being put ashore at Nantasket, I will reach home the next day. A man in such a case as is this youth, hath no want of a wife, though the promise of one, be she the woman that his heart doth elect, lendeth him good courage.

Barbara, I do desire but thy happiness; but, if he doth truly love you, thy happiness should be his also, and I doubt not he will see the wisdom of proving his worthiness ere he takes upon himself the office of a husband."

"Yet still I do think he doth need the cheer of a wife's company, for he is prone to fall into moody fits in which he sees not for himself what course should be followed. He is then a desperate man—a most desperate man," she repeated, troubled by a vision of Jasper's face with the strange, wild look upon it that it had worn that day she had promised to be his wife.

"Oh infinitely strong and infinitely tender is a good woman's love," groaned Master Rutland, with his sad eyes fixed upon the floor. "I will consider her happiness and leave mine with God."

"The way lies plain before him," he said aloud. "I will manage all. Thy part is but to hide him upon the island I spoke of,

and while he waits for the shallop, ye can go secretly to him and imbue him with that courage and energy thou dost never lack. Be he half a man, with such a recompense in the end, he can go cheerfully through his part. Trust me, Barbara, and when the time cometh when he shall be able to care for a wife, my help shall ye both have."

He had recovered his true poise but he looked at her with a sadness from which she shrank. Though he talked shrewdly, and with such calmness, he yet had the look of a dumb man with a knife in his heart, the memory of which haunted her for many a rueful day.

The court beauty rose, her eyes seeking his through a mist of tears.

"Trust you," she murmured—"ay, and I thank God for all those good stanch qualities which once in my folly I sought to overthrow."

CHAPTER XIX

WHEN the night-clouds had drifted, yet before the dawn of day, at that hour when outward nature looks chilliest and the human face wears corpse-like tints, when all that is difficult seems hopeless, and our trouble presses heaviest upon us, a boat by Maverick's landing set a stealthy sail for the outer islands.

The preparations for Jasper's departure had been hastily made during the night. Neither he nor Barbara had slept and now the pressure being removed, they sat nerveless and silent, as under the management of Scipio, the boat drove through the morning mist.

The day opened grey, with a southerly breeze. The sea was of a steely grey, lying under a sky mottled with soft clouds, through which now and then the sun burst forth sending showers of diamonds in long,

glittering streaks upon the sea. The day was four hours old when the boat grated upon the pebbly beach of the island—a great mass of scowling rock of granites and porphyries whose cleft and overhanging cliffs made safe hiding places for a hunted man. These steadfast boulders that bore the brunt of the waves that went plunging into Boston harbour, might shame a man into fortitude, might make him consider if it were not possible for him, also, to stand in his appointed place and with calm front bear the buffeting of fate, sure that these, too, have their ebb-tide.

The island which in other moods would have thrilled Annesley with its heroic beauty and in which he would have found a thousand charms, now awakened only the gloomiest and most desperate thoughts. By the tongue of the east wind, by the voice of the angry breakers, it testified to its unwillingness to hide the traitor and blasphemer, and far behind him lay that dim

coast whereon his life had passed, and before him the wide, untried sea.

They sat down together hand in hand on the sere grass that tufted the cliff.

"Be not so cast down," said Barbara, having watched her companion some moments in silence. "There can be no miscarriage, as I see, in our plan, but a little while will pass, and either you will return here to a fairer life than you have found under the present laws. or will I go to thee, and we will begin life in a country where there be no such tyrannies. Dear Jasper, it doth flatter me little to find you so hopeless and of such poor courage."

"Ah, sweetheart, much doth lie between the day ye speak of and this whereon mine own sin hath forced me to hide myself from my fellows. Barbara, if a man could but fly from his conscience. Oh, ye little know, ye little know my misery."

With a gesture of despair he got up and walked to and fro upon the space of level

earth that filled the basin of rock where they sat.

"Can you not do for me what you will not for yourself and shake off these vapours," begged Barbara, following him with her eyes. "The brave, taste not the bitter cup till it is at the lip," she went on, in the healthiness of her mind, unable to conceive of the condition of his which frightened itself not so much with real dangers as such imaginary ones as are suggested by a morbid religion. "This glorious day at least is ours. Come up then out of that dungeon of misery and be happy with me in this old stone castle, battlemented with thistles and such a moat before it as no enemy is like to cross this day. Aha, see you the sulky day breaks into a smile, if you will not. Come, we will have a brave time of it; let us have a game of huckle stones in which you will see that I am a proficient."

Choosing a handful of pebbles, she seated

herself by a flat rock, bidding Jasper to sit before her, which, at last, he did.

What bizarre mosaic-work would be the history of this old, old game with the scenery of so many ages and lands, beginning perhaps by the smoky fire-place of a primitive lake-dwelling, with an endless succession of castle-gardens, highways, plazas and camps, to this mid-sea, foam-fringed island, where on the topmost crag a girl in her brave misery played for the distraction of a half-crazed lover.

Perched at this height, the rich loveliness of Barbara was clearly imaged against the grey sky. The dainty grace of her head, with upraised, lustrous eyes, or downward glance from under deepfringed lids, the perfect symmetry of her form, the endearing beauty of the oustretched arm with its firm sweet curves—the hand flashing like a sea gull amidst the whirl of stones; in short, all her fairness and bloom and infinite grace

might well banish gloomy thoughts from a man's mind. Indeed for a moment Jasper's eyes rested upon her with their wonted delight, then he turned away with a groan as the agony came back.

"Tush, 'tis a foolish game," she said, throwing down the pebbles, "let us rather divert ourselves with music. Dear, shall I sing the song you like?"

But after singing a verse of the song her voice faltered, for she saw that her pains were lost; whereupon, thinking that she had hit upon a better expedient, she started a merry catch, bidding him to take up the air. Though he tried to obey, he could not, but shook his head sadly. Then with much coaxing she got him upon his feet and started a race, but looking back, saw that he stood staring at her with the knot of pain in his forehead and misery in his eyes. She went back to him and again sought to mend his mood by argument.

"You have done naught amiss, dear Jas-

per. Why talk ye of treason? 'Tis not you who have been guilty of it, but the rulers and magistrates of yonder town, for they be rebels to our king. They do govern by an arbitrary government of their own, contrary to the laws of England. And as for blasphemy, that is a sin against God. Deem ye that to speak reproachfully of Master Cotton is the same? Truly, these elders have a marvellous conceit, taking themselves to be all one with God. For myself, I do dare conceive there be at least some slight difference."

No arguments, however, could prevail against that troubled, obstinate vision that floated ever before him. Dismayed and bewildered by a condition of affairs which was unconquerable by energy and persistence, she sat in miserable silence.

So the day passed. The tide rose and took the little island in its arms. Light clouds gathered and broke. The soft breeze rose and fell, and over and over again, al-

ways in vain, did Barbara repeat these poor devices to bring back his peace of mind.

As the day waned, a chill wind whistled from the east, steel grey clouds blew up and spread over the sky. The heavy air, the sombre sea, the coming of night increased the darkness of Jasper's mood.

"Oh, Barbara, Barbara," he burst out. "Do not leave me here alone or I shall go mad. Sweetheart, if ye have any love for me, let me go back with you."

"But so you will lose the opportunity to escape the coil of your uncle," answered Barbara. "Would ye run with your eyes open into such dangers—for no reason either, save the will to pass one short night alone here?"

"Oh, Barbara, how little ye know the agony I endure in an instant of time that makes an eternity of it—a whole night, and alone with the accusing voice, the horrid spectacles that I have told ye of?"

Barbara was not unmoved by his entreaties, but to yield them would have been folly.

"Courage," she said; "after the suffering you have endured you will sleep soundly. Come, let us go to the other side of the island where the wind is broken and where you can find a comfortable resting place."

After a little search they discovered low beneath the cliffs a cave that well answered the purpose of a bed-chamber. Its rocky walls made a serviceable weather-fend, dulling the beating of the surf into a soft and sleepy murmur. Here, out of skins, they made a comfortable bed and lying down upon it, Jasper fell asleep.

With the knowledge that at last he was out of torture, Barbara breathed a deep sigh of relief. She was utterly exhausted with the continuous and unavailing effort she had made to inspire him with hope and courage, for nothing could have lessened her own hope and courage so much as this want of

such qualities in him. Yet, she could look at him only with pity as he lay in this rough hiding-place, his fawn-heart overshadowed by the images of a hideous creed, so that all the bright young joyousness and zest had died out of his face.

At last an approaching sail warned her that the moment of their separation had come, but to leave Jasper without a parting word seemed too cruel. She told herself that she could not do it, and yet having made this decision the alternative seemed equally impossible. It would be no easier to tear herself from his wild entreaties and leave him beside himself on this lone island. Then she figured to herself the surprise of Rutland, when on the morrow he would find her here alone with her lover, his courage and cheer restored by his much needed sleep. Even as she looked at him, his brow cleared and his lips took their merry, upward curve or the grey twilight cheated her. At all events, reassured by his quiet breathing,

Barbara rose swiftly and found her way to the landing where, after another agony of indecision, she finally got into the boat and sailed homeward.

CHAPTER XX

FOR a short time after Barbara left the island, Jasper slept, at first the deep sleep of perfect unconsciousness, then disturbed by painful and confused dreams. In them he found himself a boy again, seated in the Puritan church, looking with a beating heart at a condemned criminal writhing in his chains. Again he saw the pallid face of that son of death, convulsed by terror and agony, heard his deep groans, heard the very words of that discourse that had struck such terror into the heart of the child.

Then the face and figure of the malefactor changed and it was himself that stood there, and some one in the assembly rose and said:

"Brethren, there is, as it appeareth, still matter of complaint against this man why he should not be received amongst us."

Whereupon a great confusion of voices arose in the church, and the people cried:

"It is a lost soul. Let us chase him out of this holy place," and frightened by their anger, he ran out.

He ran for his life, and found himself upon a long narrow bar of sand with a sapphire sea sparkling before him. He could hear the waves as they broke upon the beach. He could taste the salt of the sea upon his lips, and behind him he could hear the pad, pad of approaching wolves, scores of grisly, green-eyed wolves calling after him with human voices

"A lost soul! A lost soul!"

In his agony he screamed and awoke. With his heart beating to suffocation and with shaking limbs he groped out of the cave. The cold air struck sharply upon him turning his sweaty garments to a shroud of ice. He called Barbara's name but only to be answered by the screaming wind. Gaining the top of the cliff he discovered a little sail far to the westward.

"Can it do naught else, a lost soul at

least can shriek," he thought. In very truth the sound he uttered in its frantic appeal, and the sharpness of its agony might have been the cry of the doomed—a long-drawn sound indescribably mournful, and blood-chilling mingling with the roar of the water and the wail of the wind. Yet no human voice from the island could reach the ear of Barbara in the little rocking boat far away on the bay, and at last Jasper sank down in despair.

As long as it could be seen, he watched the sail, but when it was entirely out of sight and not a trace of humanity in the visible universe, he got on his feet and climbed the rocks to that point whereon he and Barbara had sat and she had vainly tried to comfort him. There on the sere grass, like a pool of blood, was the red scarf that she had worn which gave him a momentary comfort—as a human presence would have done. Its contact as he wound it round his body was like the soft warm arms

of Barbara sustaining him with her marvellous courage. Then his hallucination came back. He was lost. He was given up to the devil. The idea throbbed in his inflamed brain like an ulcer, and Barbara was again forgotten.

When morning broke after the unsurpassed anguish and horror of the night, Jasper's only thought was to get away from the island. In the early dawn he discovered a ship along the north shore. At first her course seemed to take her beyond the reach of hailing, but having rounded the cape since called Nahant, she bore southerly and came within sight of his signals.

The ship was a so-called trader, but if not sea-robbers out and out, the crew no doubt had been guilty of buccaneering practices. It is a significant fact that the alliance of those fierce socialists of the sea known as the "Brothers of the Coast" was made in the same epoch that the little body of future Pilgrims first for conscience's sake, with-

drew from the established church of England, and piracy flourished most rankly in that period of human history when conscience was appointed to the place of chief lawgiver. These men among whom Jasper found himself were lawless sea-rovers, who under the eccentric morality of the 17th century were allowed to trade in all the colonies along the New England coast—and were now making for the Puritan Port. Their faces were blackened by tropical suns and beaten by the whirlwinds of the north. They had the hard, glittering eyes of men accustomed to look constantly upon blood spilling and barbarities. Their perilous lives demanded only the virtues of independence and courage, all gentler ones being thrown overboard as useless or even dangerous freightage.

"Here's a queer bird who calls himself a lost soul," said one of the two sailors who had brought Jasper from his island to the ship and presented him to the curious crew.

"He is a fugitive from the Puritan paradise yonder and was in hiding on that island."

"A lost soul is he?" cried the ship-master seemingly not ill-pleased at the appellation. Turning to Annesley he continued, "Look ye, knave, we are bound for the Spanish coast and are short of hands, will you go with us?"

The captain had a fiercely commanding air which made compliance seem wise. His coal-black eyes were bold, and arrogant, and his beard which reached to his waist was a fiery red. This natural ferocity of aspect was enhanced by art, his dress being a combination of scarlet and black. Around his hat was coiled a metallic serpent scaled and spotted to the life, with huge goggling eyes of glowing carbuncles.

Annesley dared not refuse him, moreover to join these filibusters, for such he deemed them, seemed now his sole chance of escape from the Puritans, which chance, he doubted not, had been provided him by the devil,

whose son he now was. These desperadoes then, were his right brothers—outlaws like himself, though not under so black a ban since they dared show themselves in the town and he dared not.

"Ye are an honest knave," said the captain approving his ready decision, "and do well for yourself, too, in shaking off the tyranny of governments. They be all made of rogues to protect 'em in their trickeries. By blood and wounds, we have as good a right to make our fortunes on the sea as they on land, nor do we hinder any other if they have the courage for it, from doing the same as we do."

The ship which had come into the main channel was presently stopped by the fog, and the buccaneers passed the time in drinking and recounting tales of valour, as they styled their exploits. But neither desire for plunder, love of adventure, nor the wish to pose as a hero is an incentive to a man of

Annesley's temperament, and the realisation that he had cast in his lot with these red-handed sea rovers drove him into a desperation in which he out-did them in the wildness and audacity of his speech. The unaccustomed fumes of their wine mounted to his brain and was in part accountable for a bravado that convinced the sailors that he was made of good pirate-stuff.

At last about mid-day, availing themselves of a lift in the fog they put into port. As they approached the town, Annesley fell into sudden silence. The influence of the place, its rude dignity, its stern morality, its gloomy creed overpowered him. His memory was a hive of stinging recollections. Moments of aspiration came back to torture him. He remembered himself a lad glowing with the sentiment of honour and personal dignity—and he was here. He saw himself the pride and light of gentle, maternal eyes that saw for him a career of

usefulness—and he was a pirate. Suddenly, and still more sharply he thought of the constancy and devotion of Barbara; then he covered his face and groaned, knowing that he had more than lost her, knowing that in his depravation he was unworthy of her.

The pirate crew had not intended that Jasper should go into the plantation where, were he impelled to it, he might imperil their necks by betraying them to the authorities, but the fog was so dense that there seemed little danger of recognition and they took him with them to guide them about the town; therefore he found himself walking about the streets with a roystering crew of mariners to whom he was pledged in a guilty brotherhood. They had given him a mantle that partly covered his own garments and a wide-brimmed hat that hid his face. Now, however, he had lost his fear of the Puritan authorities in his fear of being carried off to sea in the pirate ship. His

changed manner did not escape the sharp eyes of his fellows who whispered:

"By the wounds of God, we must get him back to the ship or he'll have us hanged!"

Having come into the market-place, they could but be conscious as they made their way to the market stalls, of sharp eyes peering at them through the fog; the usual tolerant curiosity with which the people regarded mariners now, in view of the danger of the escape of Child's party into England by means of some such ship as theirs, giving place to suspicion.

"Pull your hat down over your face, boy," counselled one of the sailors to Annesley. "Yonder saint has an eagle's eye on ye. Do ye know him?"

"Faith, can he see me through this thick air, he hath an eagle's eye indeed. Of a surety I can see naught of him save two fat legs, a blur where his body is, and the steeple of his hat."

"Be quiet, fool. You will get yourself as well as us into trouble. These men are watching us," whispered the sailor, pulling Annesley aside.

While they were bargaining for supplies for their ship he succeeded in disengaging himself from his companions, and suddenly, heedless of the wonder of the town's people started at full speed across the market-place. He was well practised in running, of unusual fleetness, and the knowledge that he was pursued urged him to his fastest pace. But the fog bewildered him. To his fevered fancy it seemed to hide awful dangers, to be an instrument to the Lord to destroy him. Little caring whither he turned so that he escaped the pirates, he tore breathlessly on, but never beyond sound of pursuing footsteps.

At last stumbling upon a stone he fell and though he quickly recovered himself the delay was fatal.

"Oh, my God!" he cried shuddering, for

looking up he perceived he was under the black pine. At the same moment he felt himself seized and a voice cried:

"I arrest you in the name of the Commonwealth."

CHAPTER XXI

AFTER a miserable night Barbara rose to find the day unpropitious for the sailing of Master Rutland's pinnace.

Having hurriedly dressed herself, she climbed to the top of the fortress to watch for ships. Here, hour after hour on the rude timbers of the log stronghold she sat straining her eyes into an impenetrable, hopeless fog. Her black garments were grey with the mist, her white face glistened with it, and her hair was heavy with moisture. Again and again did Mistress Amias come to bid her go in from the cold and dampness, but seeing her set face the words died in her throat, and she crept away again.

At noon the fog lifted and like a phantom passing behind the sheet of mist, the pirate ship could be discovered slowly making its way into port. With no foreboding of its

significance to herself, Barbara watched it eagerly. It broke the monotony of her long watch, and gave her hope that the looked-for outgoing boat would soon be visible. In truth, in no long time afterward she had the joy to behold a small craft moving seaward.

"'Tis Master Rutland's shallop!" cried the watcher, and instantly, though muffled by the thick air, came the booming of a gun. It was like a hand held out to one groping in darkness. At the signal, a dazzling colour flashed into the luminous whiteness of the girl's wet face. She held out her arms and great joy and thankfulness shone in her tired eyes. Long she stood watching the shallop and something there was, she thought, most stately and serene in its progress, something not unlike him at whose word it had run the hazard of the fog-choked sea.

When, however, the shallop was lost in the impenetrable greyness and she went below, her cheeks were pale again, and her

eyes wore their new look of pain. The children, shy of her in this unfamiliar mood, ran away, and her good aunt having placed her by the fire with food before her, tiptoed about her household employments with ludicrous grimaces of angry self-reproof when by mishap her movements broke the silence.

At last Barbara turned and said with a half-smile:

"Good Aunt, ye be in a marvellous quiet mood. Truly, I do miss your cheery talk."

"Has Master Rutland's shallop gone out?" asked the dame who had long had the question at the tongue's end.

"'Twere a fool-hardy thing to put to sea in this weather. 'Twas on just such a foggy day I do remember when a shallop of your uncle's did strike on the sharp teeth of those outer harbour rocks and was lost. The shallop did carry three persons banished for heresy, who did urge the ship's sailing, dreading the foggy sea far less than the

Puritan magistrates. As for those bigots they did not stick to say that 'twas a manifest judgment of God. If so, 'twas for their fool-hardiness rather than for their heresy. I marvel Master Rutland being a prudent man should so tempt Providence. 'Tis as thick a fog as ever I saw, and I fear me grows worse."

"Surely a promise should be fog-proof," Barbara answered with a proud lift of the head that belied the coldness of her words. "Where is my uncle? I would fain ask him if in truth, the voyage be so perilous."

"Why, child, the marshal did come long ago to hale him before the magistrates. Alack, why didst ever your uncle seek for more privileges? 'Tis privilege enough I warrant in this plantation if a man have his legs free of the stocks and carry a whole head upon his shoulders. Alack, I know not what will be the end of this business."

"I take no thought save for him that I have led against his will into it. The others,

they are stout and mettlesome men, but he —Oh ye know well good Aunt, 'tis far different with Jasper."

"Barbara, hast thou ever thought that he doth lack the courage that should be in every true man? Verily, I love the lad like a son," she went on. "So gentle is he, so hot to do thee service, with such pleasant turns in conversation and so merry withal. Yet—yet he was mightily shaken at sight of this danger. Would you call him a coward, Barbara?"

"No, no, that would I *never,*" was the quick answer. "Nor is he accounted such by those who have seen his mettle tried. Verily, Aunt, I do remember well many a tale of valour of which he is the hero, that the young men of the town have related to me. Nay, Jasper Annesley is no coward though he be of a strange, desponding humour sometimes."

"The girl loves him, be he coward or no," thought the dame, and she added:

"Truly, darling, a hard life hath a wife who must go through the world before her husband with fife and drum to keep his courage up. Let a woman be of what mettle she may, she doth ever like some good support to be within reasonable distance."

Meantime the fog had gathered even thicker upon the sea, and Rutland's was the only craft that went out that day. Maverick did not return from the court till night-fall, when, calling for food and wine, he flung himself into his chair by the fireside, weary and depressed. In all of the harassing anxiety of the past month he had borne himself in his own household with perfect sweetness, but now he was moodily silent, or gave curt answers to the questions of his wife.

Mistress Maverick sat upon the opposite side of the hearth feeding her youngest child from a bowl of bread and milk. With each spoonful she put in the child's mouth, she opened her own and looked like some

gentle, foolish bird. The smile with which she met Maverick's glance seemed to be brought out on approbation, and at his disapproving frown was instantly withdrawn. Humouring his mood she checked her curiosity, but Barbara was mistress of no such patience.

"For God's sake," she said at last, "give us what news there be." She placed her hand upon his shoulder with a touch of command that irritated him still farther, but immediately upon looking into her white face he answered:

"Ay, child, you shall have the news, though there be pleasure neither in the telling nor hearing of it. The Court knowing that Doctor Child was to sail in *The Supply* tomorrow morning and suspecting that he would carry the true account of proceedings here to the Parliament, gave the order to have his study searched for papers and also that of Master Dand."

"A foul outrage," cried Barbara. "Were any papers found?"

Maverick laughed bitterly. "Ay, they did take such writings as they pretended justified them in committing Dand in whose house they were taken and also the Doctor and Smith (who being at Dand's house sought to get possession of the writings) into the custody of the marshal, till *The Supply* shall have sailed. Except that the Doctor giving bail, is kept at his own house."

"What writings did they find, Uncle? Was that petition of non-freemen, for liberty of conscience and a general government among them?"

"Ay, and another setting forth the way this petition has been received at the court here, and such insults as the petitioners have endured. But that which hath doubtless most stirred the spleen of the Court is the paper of some twenty questions, one of

them touching the validity of the patent of this colony. "Barbara," he went on, "ye know that I was not over-hot in the matter of this petition, for I had always desired to live peaceably with my neighbours which with patience and prudence, I thought were no unattainable thing; yet I now see such a course requires all the meanest part of a man—hypocrisy, slavish submission, and disloyalty to one's God and King, but to fail in the end. But I have now done with all that. This day the Governor whom I did ever unfeignedly love and respect, hath shown what is his policy, and I do hold 'tis not that of a just man."

Maverick's head dropped upon his breast, but his future might be prophesied from the lines of stern resolve which the day had set upon his handsome face.

"Is this all that ye have to tell?" asked Barbara, who, all this time had been leaning on the back of his chair.

He looked up, his attention caught by the

anxious eagerness of her tone, for she was conscious that there was something on his mind that he had not yet spoken of.

"What is it, Uncle?" she gasped, for she read confirmation of her fear in his eyes which met hers with reluctance.

"Why, to speak plainly, Barbara," he said in a voice that strove plainly to hide his uneasiness, "there has been a miscarriage in our plans and Annesley hath fallen into the hands of the authorities. How it befell I know not, but though Master Rutland's shallop hath sailed, the boy is now in irons in the prison."

She flung up her arms in a gesture of despair, and Maverick rising from his chair began in his nervous excitement to pace the floor.

"Tut, tut, girl, where is thy courage?" he said chidingly. "Such as do venture into the storm should not complain of bad weather. I'll warrant that Annesley will bear his ill fortune with the patience and

courage that becomes a man of his quality, as I do firmly hope to do when my turn comes."

"But, Uncle, Jasper is of a different humour than yourself," she said, following him with eyes that yet seemed not to see him. "You do not know how the imagination doth delude and hurry him on to desperate things. Poor boy, he hath been led on to his ruin, to his ruin."

"You do concern yourself more than is reasonable. Think no more of the matter, dear heart, the boy is naught to you."

"Who I pray you did first urge and bid him to sign the petition, and so to be the means of bringing him to this plight?" she flung out at him scornfully. "Do you then now in good earnest tell me to turn my back upon him? If that be the complexion of your honour, 'tis far different from mine."

"Be reasonable, Barbara," he urged again. "I do grievously deplore the sad

mischance that hath delivered him into his enemies' hands, yet others are suffering the like hardships and yet make no such hue and cry. And by my truth I cannot see that there is aught to be done about it."

"Not if one remains here, but I am going to the town."

"Girl, ye are mad!" cried Maverick seizing her by the wrists, while the good dame stretched her neck to look at her over the child's head, and the hound excited by the turmoil flung himself upon them barking loudly. "What forsooth can ye do there?"

"At least, Uncle, I can go to the prison and bid him be of good cheer—for I am his promised wife." She cried this last out desperately. "Let me go, the time passeth while we do wrangle here."

"Barbara, ye stand in no such relation to Jasper Annesley as ye speak of, nor ever will. Why, see the folly of it. The youth cannot take care of himself, much less of

you. Would ye marry a babe in arms, a lambkin? Why the girl is mad. Dost tell me in sober earnest that ye love this pigeon-face? Nay I mean no disrespect to him. The boy is well enough, but he hath not been fashioned for you. By the laws here a maid cannot wed without consent of her guardian, and mine ye shall never have."

"Ye talk strangely for one that be fighting these laws with all his might." She gave a shrill laugh and then, flinging him off, ran from the room.

"She doth mean to go to the town," cried Dame Amias, staring at her husband with startled eyes, and holding the spoon upside down to the child's mouth, "Why didst let her go free?"

"She cannot go for the fog," he answered.

But Barbara having groped her way to the landing, found a boat and with desperate madness trusted herself to the sea. In the dense darkness it was folly to steer, but the tide floated her toward the town.

Strangely favoured by chance, having crossed the bay the boat struck at last upon a gravelly point of land below the town pier at a spot that lay not far from the centre of the town. Had Barbara chosen for herself she could have done no better.

It was now about six o'clock, the last gleam of daylight had faded, and there were only such faint rays of light as penetrated into the fog through the windows of the houses to guide her through the town. Having come at last, as she judged, very near to the Governor's house she stumbled suddenly upon the watch who bade her stand.

"Who are you and what your errand abroad?" he asked in a gruff voice, and Barbara, who until this moment had no plan, answered:

"For the love of Christ do not hinder me. I am bound for the Governor's house for one who is in peril of his life." Whereupon, knowing that many sought the Gov-

ernor's skill in medicine, he bade God bless her, and let her pass. Nay, being a kindly man and seeing no harm in her, but only a woman in distress, he overtook her again and lighted her to the door of Governor Winthrop's dwelling, and having come to this point he stood still, waiting till she should obtain entrance there. In this way do trifles sometimes teach us our parts.

CHAPTER XXII

GOVERNOR WINTHROP was seated at a writing table, the sole occupant of a long, bare, dim-lighted room. It had been planned with reference to his requirements in an official capacity and would accommodate a great assembly of people. Along the length of two walls were placed some heavy high-gabled chairs, and these with the writing table were its sole furnishings.

The Governor sat at the extreme end of the room in the circle of light cast by two tallow candles, and was so remote and distant from the door by which Barbara entered as to give a certain impressiveness to his figure like that upon the stage of a theatre. Of a spare rather than powerful frame, with a face of more sensitiveness than that of his associates as they have come down to us in their portraits, at least, and dressed plainly in black, this the ablest of

Massachusetts' early governors was possessed of a simple elegance that befitted his position as chief magistrate of the colony.

The light as it fell upon his bent head discovered silver streaks in his brown hair; and drawn lines about his face, wearing at the moment as he bent over his task, the perplexity of one seeking in a few sentences to dispose of a grave political matter. In truth, the ink was not dry upon that honest record from which source our best knowledge of the beginnings of New England has been gained. For he had set himself the double task of making and writing history, urged to the latter perchance by the consciousness that the former might require justification, and that the best defence for the founders of Massachusetts would be a plain setting forth of the never ending dangers that menaced their political existence. Though aiming at no literary achievement, a conscientious account of any political event exacts a strain on a man's rhetoric

calling for careful distinctions in thought and language. The statement for instance that America was discovered in 1492 is easily made, but we know that it falls far short of the actual truth. That, after years of wandering, the return of the Polo brothers to their native city proving the truth of their tales of the vast opulence of the East by ripping jewels out of their ragged garments, and the geographical knowledge they gave to Europe, or the closing of the Mediterranean by the Turks forcing Europe to find an oceanic route to Asia, were with others no less significant, links in the chain of events of which the sailing of the three caravels from Palos is the most famous.

Winthrop's task, moreover, was that of a contemporary historian. The smoke of the battle had not yet rolled away from the field, but he wisely wrote with no attempt at casuistry, and for simple dignity his work can hardly be surpassed. A scheme

to bring a viceroy of England to rule over the colony and the establishment of churches according to the reformation in England, must have raised in him the bitterest spirit of opposition; but in his account of the proceedings relating to Child's conspiracy no trace of such feeling is to be found.

He was writing the record of the day so momentous to the petitioners when a servant announced Mistress Ryche.

Exceedingly fair she looked as she came slowly toward him, moving upon the dim background of that bare apartment with the dignity lent by an earnest and generous purpose. The Governor's brow had clouded at the mention of her name, and though he rose and placed a chair for her opposite his own, his manner had no encouragement in it. The face which lent itself so easily to geniality and tenderness gathered a sternness that might have intimidated a woman less fearless than she who now sought

this interview. Distrust and disapproval encased him in an armour, proof against all feminine guile.

Though Barbara had come with no preparation for her part her woman's wit taught her how to play it. Or, what is still more likely, she played no part that day.

"I would speak with Your Worship in behalf of Jasper Annesley, he whom you have now in the prison," she began. "'Tis not as you think with him, and if you do proceed against him, refusing to listen to that which I have come hither to say, you will act unjustly, and as I do truly believe, ye will afterwards repent of it."

"We censure no man without a trial" said the Governor shortly, but impressed perhaps with the absolute sincerity of her manner, he lay down his pen which, upon reseating himself he had taken from the table, and seemed disposed to give her a hearing.

"True, but this man cannot plead his

own cause, for his poor, troubled brain doth see all things awry."

"He hath circulated copies of the petition and busied himself against the authorities. Canst thou gainsay that?" demanded the Governor with gathering sternness.

"'Tis true he hath done so, but which deem you guilty of the act, the axe that doth hew down the tree or him that handles it? In good earnest Jasper Annesley though he hath done as ye say, hath been as an instrument in the hands of another—one who has got a hold and control over him with sharp practices, getting the better of his understanding and so playing upon him that he hath gone against his own inclinations in the matter."

"Whom dost thou accuse, Mistress?" asked Governor Winthrop coldly.

"I myself am that other," replied Barbara with her deep eyes looking frankly into his. "Oh, consider," she went on more warmly, "what a hold a woman has over

the man who loves her, more especially when that man hath no natural ties and is under a ban among his people; above all when he is of so tender and loving a disposition as he of whom we speak. Consider, I pray thee, what a power I had over him, and I did ever use it to win him to our own party, flouting him for a coward if he did bring forward any scruples of his own conscience, bewitching and blinding him by all a woman's cunning. I be no unpractised maid either, but one that hath known many men and played on them. God knoweth I make no boast, but I would have ye realise the power I had over him."

"I perceive the enchantment that he was under," answered Winthrop whose grave eyes had been held by the beauty and force of that white face with its glittering eyes and quivering, scarlet lips. Nor could he restrain a thrill of admiration at her courage and magnanimity. "But though I perceive how he was tempted, yet he hath been guilty

of treason and doth merit punishment, else if no example be made of him whenever hereafter a man doth conceive that he hath a grievance against the government what is to hinder him also from plotting against it?"

"Jasper Annesley had no grievance against the government. He cared naught in his private heart for the petition, but only for the woman 'twas his ill fortune to love. Long I laboured vainly to stir ambition in him for civil privileges and rights. In his heart he doth hold the government here justified in such courses as it takes. And yet, most worshipful Governor, while I am scot free and Dr. Child confined in his own house merely, the boy is held in prison in irons. Is this just?" she cried, her voice with its passion and pathos falling oddly upon the cold stillness of that Puritan home.

"Perchance ye are not aware that another offence hath been charged against Master Annesley—that he is accused of

speaking reproachfully against the elders. I think, Mistress Ryche, ye do know the occasion of it."

"The grisly old uncle hath chosen his time well," thought Barbara, but she permitted her dismay to appear neither in face nor voice.

"I presume 'twas the composure in the ordinary, since that was the only time I ever heard aught from his lips in censure of either magistrates or elders," she said, and no calculation could have devised a happier answer. "Ne'er have I had a chance to forget the occasion, so grievously and continually hath he reproached himself therefor. Surely," she ended somewhat wildly, "he hath won God's pardon for it, though those who style themselves His Chosen People do keep him in irons."

"Doth he truly repent of his sin he will be freely pardoned," said the Governor quickly. "Nor do I think the reproach against our people justifiable, we being

ever ready to accept the repentance of an offender, and pardon him. Doubtless ye know, Mistress Ryche, that in the case of each and all the petitioners the Court did offer that if they would acknowledge their miscarriages, the sentence passed should be freely remitted. If, however, they cannot abide the laws here, the wide wilderness is before them as it was before us, where they also can choose a corner and found a state after a pattern that pleases them better."

"But, surely, some had already chosen their homes here, long ere ye Puritans came hither. Ye know well the disadvantage 'twould be to my uncle, Samuel Maverick, to flee farther into the wilderness, deserting his stronghold and the trade he hath established here."

There was a look of subdued pain in the Governor's face. He passed his hand wearily across his brow furrowed by the manifold perplexities that had bestead his

course. By nature just and gentle, the exigencies of his position, to which he believed himself appointed by Heaven, seemed to force him into acts of persecution, and the plea Barbara put forth had no doubt been made a hundred times by his own heart. For at the close of his earnest and busy life when pressed by Dudley to some act of cruel persecution he is said to have answered:

"Of that work I have done too much already."

And that day was no long time after the one in which this interview took place. At last he said:

"You look at the matter, Mistress, from one side only, but a man who accepts a public office is compelled in honesty to consider the general good rather than that of individuals, though the cases be ever so piteous. The safety of the commonwealth doth require that disaffected persons should either submit to the laws or go hence. It

must be so, else how cruel is the case of those, the great body of our people who have come to a howling desert for the purpose of founding a true church state. Among them are women young and tender as thyself, nurtured in the soft lap of our most fair and pleasant island, used to all delicacies, who did for Christ's sake suffer all that a savage country can inflict and whose suffering, were I to forget the duty laid upon me, would I make void and vain. That which they have borne I can ne'er forget nor can you have any true sense of."

"Ye speak truly, yet others that you make little account of have endured the same hardships. I speak of my kinswoman, Mistress Maverick, for she too, your worship, hath borne a part in the settlement of this plantation," Barbara could not refrain from saying. But immediately, as if eager to avoid the thorny thicket of controversy, she went on: "Most worthy sir, I came not to sue for any save him who in

God's truth is of your own mind in such matters. I pray you, therefore to deal mercifully with him."

"Verily we have no other desire than to pluck out from the fire such as there be hope of. This very night the elders go to convince Master Annesley of his fault, which if he do acknowledge and repent of, he will be pardoned. As for the temptation he was under, he being a young man in the very prime of his nature, it doth plainly show that he should be dealt with in moderation and indulgence. Mistress, I think ye may now leave the matter in our hands."

Perceiving that he hereby meant to bring the interview to an end, although greatly alarmed at the intelligence that Jasper was now to be under the raking fire of the elders' threats and denunciations, Barbara rose. In sudden eagerness she moved a step nearer to him, entering the circle of light cast by the candles, her face in its full radiance while his, as he stood with one

hand upon the table, was illuminated from below, looking strangely unfamiliar and mellow in this lighting.

"Sir this youth is in no reasonable frame of mind," she said making the appeal which was the true purpose of her visit with wide-flung hands and her deep magnetic eyes fixed upon him. "I entreat you therefore that he be freed from the irons, lest such hard usage turn his wits astray; and also that I may be permitted to visit him in the prison to carry him such comfort as I may."

Governor Winthrop looked thoughtfully at her. He knew she had been an enemy to his people—was still no doubt hopeful of victory over them. Was it simply to carry consolation to Annesley that she wished to go to the prison?

She read his glance and answered it with one whose honesty he did not make the mistake of doubting.

"I swear upon my own honour and fair name, and all I hold sacred, that I have no

design in going thither beyond that of giving Master Annesley that comfort and cheer which a man should find in the presence of the woman who is to be his wife."

"The irons shall be removed forthwith," he said after a moment's silence. "To-morrow do ye go to the prison, and the marshal shall have orders to admit you to Master Annesley. Nay, Madam," he added, laying his hand upon her arm seeing that she would have started forthwith, "restrain your impatience for the elders are to be with the young man to-night and I therefore charge you not to go to Master Brackett's house until morning."

"As to that, whether I be permitted to see him or no there is no choice for me in the matter," said Barbara with a calm smile. "Assuredly, I cannot return in this weather to my uncle's island, nor would I ask any in the town to harbour me, naught therefore remains but to lodge in the prison. Surely, I have but to step abroad and the

constable will decide the matter forthwith. Nay sir," she added for the Governor had made an involuntary gesture expressive of inquietude at her words as if, indeed, though persons guiltless of offence and those of good quality, too, were sometimes lodged there, such quarters ill befitted the young woman before him, "Your Worship need have no concern for me," and tears gathered in her dark eyes while she pressed her hands tightly together, "'twill perchance ease the pain, if even in this little part I do share the poor boy's punishment," so drawing the hood of her cloak over her head she passed out of the Governor's presence.

CHAPTER XXIII

WEARY as she was when she reached the prison, Barbara was unable to sleep. The relief she sought in her voluntary imprisonment was not to be found in any such simple measure nor was the atmosphere of Master Brackett's house favourable to repose.

Soon after she had been conducted to the dismal apartment in which she was to pass the night, the elders arrived to see the prisoner and to borrow their own phrase "to reduce him out of his error." In Jasper's remorse and almost delirious excitement, what might he not say? she wondered, and into what a desperate madness might he not be plunged? During all those hours of suspense (for the good elders of Boston were never sparing of their exhortation to malefactors) Barbara paced the floor. At times she wept and wrung her hands, but when at last she heard the slip-

ping of bolts and the tread of feet upon the stairway, she flung herself trembling against the door, hoping for a chance word from which she might augur the condition in which Jasper had been left.

As it happened, these worthy men stopped in the passage-way just on the other side of her door to wrap themselves more closely in their cloaks before going forth into the foggy night, for which reason the deep tones of Master Cotton's voice speaking to the jailer were distinctly audible.

"There is," said he, "a remarkable warning in the condition of that son of sin, who having long trodden under foot the tenders of Heaven doth now groan under the intolerable torment of the wrath of God. Being put in mind of hell, he did break forth into great disorder, but is now more quiet and I trust, Master Brackett, you will have no more trouble with him."

"If the worshipful Governor had seen in what a boisterous frame he is, your rever-

ence, I misdoubt whether he would have sent a warrant for the removal of the irons," replied the jailer's voice. "Though he is of slight personage, when the fit is on him ten men could not hold him down. Moreover, there be grave reason to fear, if he be not closely watched, he will break prison and escape."

"I pray thee be vigilant, good jailer, be vigilant," urged old Master Wilson, then the footsteps moved on and presently Barbara heard the opening and closing of the heavy prison door.

Utterly exhausted she lay down upon the straw bed with which the room was provided. Upon the walls of darkness of that place, (for fearing she might later have more need of it, she had blown out the candle-end which was all that had been allowed her) the events that had led to this miserable night were vividly pictured, and a hundred times she asked herself the unavailing question—How could ingenuity

and affection contrive more happily? A hundred times she blamed that prudence which had held her back when for the last time she and Annesley had been free to take their lives in their own hands,—when he had begged her to trust herself to him and the sea, and she would not. And why? surely not because she lacked courage for such an adventure. If she had yielded what agony he would have been spared and from what abasement she should have saved herself.

So the night wore on, until the dawn with its brighter mood met her wide, aching eyes. The day came cold and grey, but though it broke into no radiant smile it yet seemed the face of a friend. Hope and courage twined their strong arms around her and she looked forward with brave eagerness to a future in which she should be able to repair the injury that she had done to Annesley.

Early in the morning as his orders were,

the jailer came to conduct her to his prisoner.

"I have heard no disturbance during the night," she said as she followed him closely along the dark passage ways of the prison, "whereby I judge Master Annesley to have been more amenable to reason since his fetters were taken off. I prithee, how fares he this morning?"

"Still in that miserable state that sin doth lead to. But a word in your ear, Mistress," replied the jailer stopping to turn his shrewd grey eyes upon her. "Speak not to him on the subject of religion, else I promise you he'll be like one demented again."

With this needless caution, Master Brackett drew back the bolts of a door, which having swung back on its hinges showed a dim and dismal apartment into which by a gesture he invited her to enter. For his own part he had no desire for any further companionship with Annesley than

his office made necessary, having already been put to more than usual trouble by the young man's strange humours, and as Barbara advanced slowly into the room he closed the door upon her with the resolve that the interview might be as sweet as the lovers chose but he should determine the length of it.

Through a small slit-like window set high in the wall, a shaft of faint light fell across the floor at her feet, but the more remote parts of the long room were so dark as to baffle the scrutiny of eyes accustomed to the daylight. This darkness, the damp chill of the air, and above all the ghostly stillness of the place sent a tremor through Barbara's veins. It was a silence that was far from peacefulness, and oppressed her like the atmosphere of calamity. It may be that in another mood she would have perceived no uncanniness in the atmosphere of this prison-room, or it may be that it was really charged with the misery of all

those grief-stricken individuals who had been shut up between its four walls, and the emanations of whose emotions—the life principle of misery—now floated germ-like in the air. The agony, in its whole intensity of a single soul, is far beyond the power of human imagination, and during the sixteen years since the Puritans first set this grim man-trap upon the fresh green face of the wilderness, at one time or another a vast number of unhappy persons had breathed its long-pent air. If therefore our thoughts have a dynamic force and are written upon the things that surround us, there was that stamped upon this room that might well excite that horror of which Barbara was now conscious.

Contrary to her expectation, no upspringing form was seen, no welcoming voice issued from the darkness and silence that surrounded her. Even the whispering of Jasper's name by the woman he loved elicited no response.

As she stood there with the colour coming and fading on her cheek, and her hands pressed closely over her wildly beating heart, the moment seemed to bring the realisation of her hope. On the removal of the irons, perchance Jasper had regained his courage and had found the means to escape. The ordeal of a trial by the stern Puritan magistrates with the final triumph of Captain Hollingsworth, and his own recantation and humiliation would thus be avoided. She saw an honourable future for him in another land where they should find a kinder atmosphere in which to expand the flower of that genius with which she believed him to be endowed. She could have laughed aloud in her exultation; then remembering that Master Brackett stood within ear-shot, and that it was most desirable that the knowledge of Annesley's escape should be withheld from the authorities as long as possible, she determined to make her supposed interview with him as

long as the jailer allowed, afterwards finding a pretext for engaging him in some employment that should take him away from that part of the prison. Fearful that the silence might excite his suspicion, she imitated the hum of voices in a lover's conference, the sound falling uncannily upon her own ears, bringing back the sensations with which she had first breathed the atmosphere of the room. Once more with that constriction of the heart, and dilated eyes she gazed into its dark recesses, and now in its farthest corner a figure was dimly visible. Slowly advancing, but unable to articulate an intelligible sound, she found herself at last face to face with her lover.

Hanging by her own scarf from a rough projection of the wall and still quivering in its death agony, was the body of Jasper Annesley.

The deed must have been committed immediately before Barbara's entrance into the room for the face had not yet stiffened

into the rigidity of death, and it might be that before the light of life went completely out of those glazed and awful eyes he was conscious of the presence of the woman he loved.

Overcome by the horror and agony of that moment, Barbara fell on her knees crying.

"Oh God have mercy upon him! Have mercy upon *me!*"

CHAPTER XXIV

ON the day following that on which Barbara had sought her lover in the prison, a number of the inhabitants of Boston were gathered outside the prison door.

The popular mode of recreation during the march of the centuries is transformed into as many different forms as the perianth of a flower, and is not always to be known by a gay and conspicuous colour. The ancient Saxon recreated himself by hunting the wild ox, and a dance among naked swords. His descendants, the near ancestors of the Puritans, brightened their life with pageants, masques, banquets, morris-dances and may-poles. But the Puritan with his imagination stirred almost to madness by the idea of a God of vengeance, dreaming horribly of death and punishment, proscribed all these pastimes as sinful. He sought to suppress that creature of impulse

and passion within him, thereby enjoining upon himself ceaseless labour, scrupulous honesty in his relations with men, and perfect chastity and purity of life. Having by heroic effort and self-denial climbed to the sublime peaks of moral perfection, he would not slip down again by the easy descent of sensual delights. Yet being human, he, also, had his pleasures, though they assumed so dull and ugly a hue, so graceless a shape. Doubtless he enjoyed his bitter religious controversies as his forefathers had enjoyed quarter-staff and feats of physical strength. The public humiliation of his enemies was such a pageant as pleased his taste, and the execution of criminals were exciting whirlpools flung up from the stagnant pond of his daily existence, to witness which he would travel miles through the rough wilderness.

It was in the expectation, no doubt, of some gruesome spectacle of this nature that so many persons had gathered in the space

in front of the prison yard. The day was sharp, with a cold sun gleaming over the russet tones of a wintry landscape. The wind, which all the lovely summer-time had whispered to the green leaves that life is sweet and love eternal, was now chasing them with his whip around the market place. Some crows with their harsh discordant note flew over the prison and disappeared beyond in the dense and dusky foliage of the black pine; and just as the prison door was finally flung open, that most depressive of nature's cries, the howling of wolves, came from the wilderness, where after the night-hunt the companies were being called together for sleep.

The people having now pressed back on every side, all that was mortal of Jasper Annesley was brought forth from the prison doorway, and the occasion which had drawn them from their homes and workshops seemed to be no more momentous than the burial of the suicide. It im-

mediately became apparent, however, that the obsequies were to be of a totally different character from the ordinary.

Only the day previous many of these very people had followed one of their townsmen to his grave; silently, reverently, with bared heads, they had stood by while he had been lowered into his final resting-place; then volley after volley had been fired till a barrel of powder was consumed to do him honour. But this had been a godly man of high rank, nor was it fitting in the eyes of either the magistrates or the people that this unfortunate youth, ill-starred and unblessed in his life and in his death, should be thus Christianly interred. Not to be baffled by that last desperate act, by which he sought to escape them, and also to dissuade such as might hereafter think to end their miseries by such means, the authorities had decreed that Annesley's burial-place should be in the common highway with a cart-load of stones over his

grave as a brand of infamy. At a later period this disposition of the body of a suicide became the custom of the Puritans according to their law, but the people who formed the funeral train that followed Annesley to his grave had witnessed no such grim spectacle. Such a sight might well have excited their compassion, for this was not a case of an individual suddenly brought by crime from the obscurity of a vast population, but one they had known from his boyhood. The memory of the plaintive sweetness of his voice, the wistful wildness of his eyes so easily subdued by kindness to loving trust, well might plead with them for mercy. Many of them could recall kind offices that he had done them out of his good heart. In famine-time the most irreproachable saint could not surpass him in generosity and self-denial, nor when pestilence raged could give of his strength with such gentleness to the sufferer. But no, the severity of their creed

had benumbed their humanity, and even the desperate misery that had led to the awful deed appealed to them in vain.

"See," they said, did any straggler from the outskirts, question whither they went, "see, here is one who did plot against our pure Christian government and in the horror of his own wickedness did take his own life. Come, and ye shall see how our commonwealth deals with the body of him who is guilty of the horrid crime of self-murder."

So, preceded by the grave-diggers and the cart laden with stones on which the body lay, the procession crossed the market-place, and turning northward, at last reached the malt-house road.

The precise spot where the remains of the offender were to lay had not been specified by the authorities, and the cart finally stopped beneath the black pine. No doubt to those who made the choice, knowing naught of the horror that dusky shadow-

circle had always inspired in Jasper Annesley, it seemed as fitting a spot as could be found on that dusty highway. At all events around the tree-shadow and around the body of Jasper the long procession curled like a noose, each eager face bent inward upon the grave-diggers.

This grim circle and its still more grim enclosure occupied the arena of a wide amphitheatre surrounded by the hills of Trimountain on the one side and those upon the coast on the other. The winter-sered side of Trimountain formed an unbroken wall to the west, but between the seaward hills the malt-house road suddenly dipped to the bay.

The commitment of the body of this ill-starred youth to the earth was witnessed in profound silence by those who made his funeral-train, not a sound breaking the stillness except that of the spades cleaving the earth, or the thud of the gravel as the grave was refilled. As this part of the task

was performed, however, a murmur, not articulate speech but expressive of some human emotion, emanated from those who had hitherto been as motionless as graven images. This sound, whether the expression of satisfied vengeance upon the evil-doer, or of tardy compassion, was immediately swallowed in the crash of the stones as they fell on the new-made grave. The honour of those who had departed this life in the full odour of sanctity had never been more loudly proclaimed by volleys of musketry than was the infamy of Jasper Annesley by the rattle of the stones. The echo that had thrice repeated the faint click of the spade and the dropping of the sods, had scarcely penetrated to the consciousness of those assembled about the black pine, but the rattle made by the avalanche of stones was multiplied with such a tumult of harsh sound, reverberating from hill to hill, and resounding through the quiet town with such startling effect as to strike horror to

every heart. To the morbid minds of those persons it seemed that this increase of volume and length of the sound by which they expressed their condemnation of the guilty dead, was a manifestation of Divine coöperation in it; some even questioning if it were not the discordant acclaim with which the soul of him whom they had followed to the verge of the grave was received by the hosts of hell.

As the uproar subsided, the people looked at one another aghast, their ruddy English colour paled, and drawing cloak or mantle more closely if possible about their shivering bodies. At the moment the virgin earth under the black pine had been broken, it was observed that a peculiar chill had emanated therefrom which, the wind blowing up from the sea, distributed over the town and many a rheum or ague was dated from that hour. Whether that nipping breath, cold as Puritan charity, that still sometimes makes itself felt even on blue-skied

sparkling days in this old town, has been bequeathed to it by those who dug for Jasper Annesley a branded grave, is a suggestion too improbable for a scientific generation to consider; but it was affirmed by the townspeople on the day of Annesley's burial that the exhalations that arose from the soil under the black pine were of a peculiarly gruesome character, and of a penetrating quality that had struck to the very marrow of their bones.

Having now done all that ingenuity could contrive to set the mark of their condemnation on the offender, the people were in no wise displeased, no doubt, that the moment for their dispersion had come. Singly, and in groups, they detached themselves from the circle, swiftly and silently moving away—each in his turn hurling a parting glance, as hard and cold as the stones of which it was made, at the mound that marked the burial-place of Jasper Annesley.

And yet not quite all. A man of a mellower cast than his brethren, looked back with infinite pity for one who in the hey-dey of his youth, had thrown away life and love. Several women—not the youngest among them, but such as had matured by slow painful years into ripeness of mind and heart, moved away with a sigh, as if they had found no satisfaction in the spectacle. The children, too, who had been brought hither to behold the awful fate of the sinner, now as they were led homeward looked over their shoulders with wide-eyed pitiful faces at the stone heap upon the highway, yet none the less, with the dramatic instinct of childhood, they would straightway amuse themselves by playing at suicide.

So they passed, one and all, grave-diggers first, people following; one who had stood aloof with face muffled in his cloak last of all. By the haste with which the procession made its homeward way, and his own

lingering step, he was soon left far behind, when, dropping his cloak, he disclosed a sharp grisly face which yet at that moment wore an expression not unlike regret.

As he came to the curve of the road that would hide from his eyes the spot where Annesley lay, he turned for a parting look, and therefore beheld a figure which at that moment came slowly up the malt-house road as it rose from the bay.

It was that of a woman, desolate and grey, wrapped in sombre garments that were yet not of Puritan make.

Standing at last by that branded grave, she held her arms passionately to heaven either in supplication or as one who in high-wrought mood and self-devoted purpose, calls God to witness a solemn vow.

CHAPTER XXV

THE seasons came and went. Twice had the snows of winter fallen upon the malt-house road. Twice had the summer sun beaten upon it, and now for the second time since Annesley lay beneath it, the outline of the black pine grew tremulous and tender in the blue haze of Indian Summer. Can it be that humanity alone withstands this lovely sorceress that touches all outward nature with gentleness and grace? As, with face set toward the dreamy coast, or toward the softened loveliness of Trimountain, the pedestrian passes that dishonoured grave, will he not feel the pathos of human life with its touching mistakes, its ceaseless struggle, its sin which, however maleficent, hurts none other so much as the sinner himself, and regret the vengeance he took on Jasper Annesley?

However that may be, Nature, who is

always our dear mother and never our judge, flung over him the mantle of her charity. A clump of columbines, perhaps as fitting a symbol in their wild and delicate grace, of him who lay beneath, found a foothold between the stones and danced in the sunlight which some winter storms, snapping off boughs of the gloomy pine had made a path for; while a network of vines now showing in their foliage the cheerful ruddiness of autumn, did what they might to hide the lack of charity in man.

One evening two years after Annesley's death a woman walked hurriedly along the malt-house road and stopped beneath the black pine. She was still a young woman. The rosy ivory of her skin was as pure, her eyes as lustrous, as upon that fatal day Annesley had so bepraised them. Yet with that reckless beauty of the court, with her vivacity and coquetry, playing with and delighting in life, she could feel little sympathy. Life had proved to be, after all, a

tragedy in which that bitter part, remorse, it had been hers to play. Annesley's own act had deprived her of the power to work out the expiation remorse imposes upon noble natures, and which alone would have relieved the pressure on her heart. Moreover, that cause into which she had flung herself with all her young hope and courage was now lost by the final victory of the Independent party in England. The Presbyterians were deprived of the power to help them. The King was murdered.

In the struggle against the Puritan government Maverick had lost all. He had been heavily fined, dishonoured and imprisoned. His family persecuted and insulted, and now after four and twenty years of pioneer life, with broken fortunes, he was abandoning his island.

The malt-house road was no longer so unfrequented a thoroughfare as upon that morning when Jasper had chosen it as the loneliest way to the ferry. Houses had

been built at each end of it, but on either side of the black pine was a long space on which no building stood, and choosing his chances well, one might stand for a moment unobserved by the stone mound. As often as she had occasion to go to the town Barbara paused here renewing the vow she had made upon the awful burial-day.

Now, owing to the hour, few persons were abroad and she was safe to linger. She had come for the last time, and long she stood there with her sad eyes fixed upon the grave. At last, looking toward the town she perceived that Master Rutland was coming toward her. When within a short distance of the black pine he stopped, standing silently with bared head. She saw with gratitude that his eyes were averted from her.

Their meeting was not by chance, and immediately they turned from the road into a by-path, leading across a field, to a weedy cove. There was not a sound to break the

stillness of the autumn evening and those two grey figures moving slowly through the pale dusk across the field were the only ones visible.

The Puritan walked with his eyes cast upon the ground, once only, and then with gentle sympathy, looking at the woman moving so silently and sadly beside him. Barbara was the first to break the silence.

"Sir, ye bring me bad tidings and grieve to speak. Nay then, ye shall not but I myself tell you, out of the foreboding of my heart. The court hath refused our petition to have the body of Jasper Annesley removed. Ah me, but I did hope against hope, knowing well the humour of those gentlemen."

The sweetness of her voice changed to gall and bitterness with the last words, and she looked with sudden passion at the town.

"It was a close vote," he said his eyes still cast upon the ground. "The Governor did greatly favour it and many other

worthy men, too; but the elders advised, contrariwise, reminding them that the law was made to daunt such as might think to take their own lives and should not be set at naught. Moreover, I had promise of Captain Hollingsworth that, were the petition granted, his nephew should lie on that island-spot you chose for it. I do think he doth truly grieve because of the tragic end of the young man, deploring the chain of circumstances that led to the unhinging of his mind. Barbara, on mine honour I did all I could to forward your wish, which in truth, is mine also in the matter, but mayhap the petition fared no better for my advocacy, I being as thou knowest ill pleasing to many godly persons here."

She stole a glance at him, and was startled to perceive how he had aged in the last two years. Already his chestnut hair was streaked with white, deep brooding lines were cut into the fair forehead, and

the sweetness of the lips was lost in their firm compression.

"Alack," she cried, with drooping head, "I know on whose account ye won their enmity. Ay, ye have lost for me what I shall never hear you say."

Already they had reached the water side. The flush of sunset had faded, and on the nearest island the fortress home of Maverick rose darkly against the sky. From the chimney a stream of smoke dissolving into the cold dusk bespoke that household fire kindled four and twenty years ago, by which all comers to the wilderness found kindly entertainment—by which the outcast Morton, the homeless Le Tour found a home in the chilly evening of their days, and by which neither stranger nor master would sit more. At anchor near the wharf lay the shallop in which at break of day, the family of Maverick would sail for New Amsterdam, where under the rule of the

Directors-General the Dutch were laying the foundation of New York.

"'Tis a frail boat, I trow," said Barbara pointing to the shallop, "to carry so heavy a load as this heart of mine."

As best he might he strove to comfort her, reminding her of the greater liberty to be enjoyed in the Dutch colony where persons of eighteen countries it was reported had "sat down with pack and sack." But when he had finished she did but drop her arms against her sides sighing:

"Oh, I am a-weary, a-weary of the wilderness."

She turned away, and he knew that she was crying.

For a moment his eyes, dark with pain rested upon her, then they travelled slowly to the shallop black against the gathering grey, and thence over the great watery plain of the sea.

Neither bay nor sea, nor sky, nor islands saw Master Rutland, for between them and

him rose an ancient manor—a house of unhewn stone with mosaic-work of lichens and moss, its sloping roof of red tiles rising amid the fresh green of one of the fairest counties of England. How well was each feature of it remembered—the arched doorplace, the gables, the narrow casements with the curiously carved devices of doordrip and cornices, the comfort within of wide, low-ceilinged rooms with the sunlight slanting through narrow, latticed windows. the long, winding passage-ways, the garden with quiet path between the yews, and beyond, the softness and grace of a green fertile valley through which the silver line of a stream wandered to the purple hills. How vividly he recalled it all. That manor was his own, and now with the victory of the Independents, a Puritan could live as his conscience approved on English soil.

Again he turned his wistful eyes to Barbara, who, having recovered her composure stood beside him with that air of noble cour-

age which he knew and loved so well. The vivacity and sparkle of the court beauty played no more upon her face, but the warmth and richness of her personality remained unchanged, and her beauty had a loftier, more touching quality.

"Erstwhile you spoke of the ill-feeling there is against me in the plantation," he said, moving nearer her, "God knoweth I have no fear of it, having ever had at heart the welfare of this Commonwealth. I doubt not that in good time the body of the people will disapprove of the law which gives the right of voting on temporal matters to church members only, and I have but to stand firm and wait till the tide doth turn——"

"But why do ye choose to remain here under censure? Marry, do I not know," she cried, "how cruelly the people here do contrive to show forth their malice. Why not return to England since your party there be in power?"

"And so I will," he said eagerly, "if thou goest with me. Dear heart, that remnant of your life ye hold so cheap, give it to me and by God's grace it shall be as bright as a man's love can make it. O Barbara, Barbara! Look not back to that which is past, but forward, and though I be not as he who hath gone, carrying with him that which doth make the enchantment of life, yet though I can promise thee no such glamour, will I at least stand between thee and the buffeting of a cruel world. Thy part shall be naught but to let me care for thee. Dearest, an' thou wilt, thou shalt leave the wilderness forever."

What lent the girl that sudden illumination that made her face like a rose in the dusk, or was it indeed more like the flickering gleam of a will-o'-the-wisp, so quickly it vanished, so false the hope it held.

"And would ye then indeed turn your back upon this plantation and all your dreams of its future greatness for me?" she

cried, in a voice that trembled a little. "Oh I am not worthy of all your love and kindness, but I would be still less so were I to turn my back upon this wilderness to live doucely in our own dear England, leaving the body of him whom I brought to his ruin, here in an infamous grave."

"And dost think to right the wrong thou hast done to one man, by punishing another?" he asked.

Though she knew he had not thought of any injury he had endured at her hands the girl winced, for she could not but remember the difference in his position between the present day, he being looked upon with such suspicion that there had even been talk of his banishment from the colony, and that of the time when she had first reached Massachusetts' shore when no office was too high to bespeak the people's trust in him.

In sorrow and contrition she lay her hand upon his arm.

"'Tis to punish none save mine own self,"

she said, then seeing how by her words she had laid bare her own heart she vainly sought to wring from them another meaning.

Long they paced the little beach while he plead with her. His words were simple as they were wont to be, but full of grave eloquence. And he asked so little—so little it wrung her heart, in return for his great love.

The dusk grew and grew and turned to throbbing darkness. The stars came out. The spangled heavens, the whispering reeds, the soft evening breeze—all that makes the great glowing night, whose breath is peace, whose speech is love, plead with him. And on Barbara's heart the deep pulsating voice struck like the surging waves that take into its arms some lovely island doomed to be drawn into the sea.

At last the splashing of oars proved that Rutland's opportunity—that Barbara's ordeal was over. So far, not a word had Rut-

land uttered of the long misery of hope ever deferred, of his loneliness, of the fear that sometimes tore his heart. It was not his way; but now as the boat grated on the beach it unconsciously escaped him, in the gesture with which he turned to her for the last word, in the droop of his head, in the deep groan, that came ragged and hard from the very depths of his being.

For a moment Barbara looked at him with pity, then turning her eyes toward the west she pointed to the sable plume of the pine that grew on the malt-house road.

"I cannot, I cannot," she whispered shivering. "Oh do ye not know how always between us there would be that branded grave."

"And had our petition had favourable answer," he asked quickly seizing her wrists, forcing her to face him "and had we removed Jasper Annesley's body from the highway, then wouldst thou have listened to me, Barbara? If dear love, I yet bring

it to pass, will ye even then give me that which hath long been my heart's desire, even your love?"

"Wherefore ask? They, by whose command alone it can be done—Ah they be iron men, with hearts of stone. 'T'will never be. Leave free my hands. Mine uncle's servant waiteth below with the boat."

He raised the white wrist to his lips and let it go.

"Thou art wrong, Barbara—all wrong. Dost think thou knowest those men? Ye cannot, sweet, for ye *hate* them. To know a man truly, it doth take love, faith, and charity to do but fairly well. Faith—it doth remove mountains and mightily moves the heart of man. And so I, having faith in them, knowing well the greatness of their hearts shall prevail over that scruple that hath caused them to refuse our petition. Dearest, when the ashes of Jasper Annesley no longer lie upon the highway what answer wilt thou give me then?"

She raised her hands slowly to her head gazing with wide, troubled eyes up to the starry sky.

"Were it done?" she murmured, "but no 'twill never be. An answer?—I must have time to consider it. I know not what to say—unless it be that sad word farewell, and God bless thee for the truest friend a woman ever had."

Silently they walked to the boat and he helped her into it. For a moment she let her hands rest in his.

"If it be yes," she whispered, "ye shall hear my voice once again ere I reach yonder island. If ye hear naught I do beg thee to put all thought of the love of Barbara Ryche far from thee forever."

The boat was pushed from the shore and Rutland was left alone upon the beach.

Through the dim, grey arras of the night he peered for one more sight of Barbara's face, lovely as a pearl in the mist. Had she once turned it toward him, some slight

encouragement he might take of the final fulfillment of his hope, but to the last her eyes were set toward the opposite shore. Yet although he knew it not, between eyes and shore rose a vision of the lone watcher —of the man she loved; but alas, another vision rose as well, a vision of the black pine which loomed above the crest of the hill behind her like some stern monitor, finger on lip, enjoining silence and renunciation.

For a moment Rutland stood there vainly waiting for this sign, then the boat, the boatman, and the still grey figure in the stern became as one dense mass against the lucent loveliness of the night. In a moment more the space between them was as impenetrable as the future.

The sound of the oars no longer overpowered the song of the night. The reeds rustled again, the waves sang along the shore, the underrunning tide murmured in the marshes—but no human voice mingled with the love-song of Nature.

In vain he held his breath as he would fain have stopped the beating of his heart in the intense strain of listening. The African had a brawny arm which had sent the boat forward at great speed, and by now it must have reached the island-landing—but still no message. And still he lingered, and still the reeds and the waves and the tide sang on—and that was all. Twice he turned away, twice he came back to the beach, hoping against hope.

"Let her answer or no 'tis all the same," he said at last raising his steadfast eyes to heaven. "The Lord hath given her to me for I have her love."

At that moment a voice like a flute quivered through the darkness bringing the proof he asked for. He did not hear the words, but the song was a tender ballad almost as old as the English tongue, which he had heard a hundred times and memory supplied them.

Nor could he know that Barbara had been

able to sing them only after a long struggle with burning tears and then with no hope whatever in her heart.

As for himself, he turned to the town with that faith in God, in man, and in the future which is the greatest power of the human soul.

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